THEORETICAL AND DISCUSSION JOURNAL OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY

SEPTEMBER 1958

Marxism Today

BERT RAMELSON — NEITHER PLAN NOR PROGRESS

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DISCUSSION:
W. PAYNTER
F. STANLEY
J. JARVIE — ON "WHITHER TRADE UNIONISM?"

Monthly 1/6

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Marxism Today

Vol. 2 No. 8

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Central Books Ltd.,
37 Grays Inn Road,
London, W.C.1.

Subscription rates
Six issues 10s. 6d.
Twelve issues 21s.

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Neither Plan nor Progress

Bert Ramelson

IF the aim of the Labour Party policy statements resulting from Griffiths' injunction at the 1956 Conference "to go to school for three years" has been to water down socialism—the obvious intention of *Plan for Progress,* the last in the series, is to drown socialism altogether.

There need be no surprise at this, *Industry and Society, Towards Equality, Public Enterprise* and *Prosper the Plough* prepared the ground for this impotent *Plan for Progress.*

Right Question—Wrong Answer

The pamphlet opens with a very pertinent question: "What is wrong with British economy today?" The rest of the pamphlet is devoted to finding every possible answer to this question, but the real one. It is no wonder then that the conclusions based on such a superficial analysis are largely irrelevant.

What is wrong with British economy today is, of course, that it is a capitalist economy. It is because the drafters refuse to face this basic fact that their conclusions are so feeble, enabling the *Economist* (26/7/58) to sneer "But for those who are primarily interested in knowing what a Labour Government really would do with the economy, this document is less a menace than a *joke.*"

No one will quarrel with the factual description of our present state in *Plan for Progress*:

> "Industrial production has been at a standstill ever since the middle of 1955. In many parts of the country unemployment is at its highest level since the war. The cost of living has continued to rise steadily, hitting hardest of all the weaker sections of the community. The £, despite a balance of payments surplus, has often been perilously weak. Industrial relations are at their worst for many years. Whether we take production, investment, prices or exports, we are doing really badly compared with most West European countries.
>
> "This is a formidable list. But the most important fact about the British economy today is that production has stopped growing. Industry is no longer adding to the nation's wealth" (p. 5).

The reason given for this sorry state of affairs follows immediately on this graphic description. We are told:

> "This is no accident, for the Tories have deliberately rejected economic expansion. For the past three years they have consistently prevented industry from using its capacity to the full" (p. 5).

One would think that all was well with Britain's economy before 1955. It is as if there had been no crisis in 1947, 1949, 1951 and 1955, as if inflation hadn't been with us and with every capitalist country, continually and consistently for nearly twenty years: as if this was the first time in the history of capitalism that its economy had ceased to expand.

It is one thing to say that the Tory monetary policy has aggravated the situation, has increased hardships and hastened the natural process of periodic capitalist economic breakdown. But it is the height of self-deception to ascribe to Tory fiscal policy the sole or even the major reason for the present industrial stagnation.

The Basic Contradiction

The real reason is the basic contradiction in capitalism between social production and private appropriation. In the final analysis this is expressed in the inability of the mass of the people to buy back the product of their labour. This must sooner or later lead to a breakdown—to stagnation and contraction of production and all the consequences which follow.

Increased investment is no solution. For in the final analysis the aim of investment is to produce goods for consumption—and here arises the insoluble problem of realisation under capitalism. No amount of capitalist "planning" can get around the faster rate of increase in productivity compared with the rate of increase in real wages under capitalist conditions, resulting in periodic crises of over-production. A high rate of investment in capital goods, as Lenin pointed out in "A Characterisation of Economic Romanticism" can prolong a boom (while investment is in the pipeline) but cannot indefinitely postpone a slump.

Thus what gives rise to periodic stagnation and even contraction of the economy with lesser or greater frequency is capitalism itself. So long as our economy remains capitalist it cannot be "so managed that a rapid and *continuing* increase in the national wealth is achieved" as the authors of this document claim. This or that fiscal policy can affect the duration and gravity of the breakdown, it cannot prevent it.

To suggest the contrary as this statement does, is either deliberate deception or abysmal ignor-

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ance resulting from a refusal to see things as they are. In the light of recent world experience there is no excuse for such blindness.

The only economies which have shown throughout their existence "rapid and continuing increase in their national wealth" are the socialist economies. This is partially admitted: "we have been lagging behind other industrial nations *particularly those on the other side of the Iron Curtain*" (p. 6). It is a pity the Labour policy drafters did not delve a bit deeper. If they did they could discover a simple reason for this rapid and continuous industrial expansion in the socialist countries—capitalism has been removed and a socialist economy put in its place.

The central theme of the statement—to bring about continuous and expanding production as the basis for full employment, lower prices, higher living standards, improved social services and strengthening our "international position"—is doomed to failure from the start due to its basic assumption that there is nothing wrong with capitalism itself, but only the Tories' stupid mismanagement of capitalism.

Having decided that there is really nothing wrong with capitalism that can't be cured by a correct investment policy, we are not surprised to learn that the first job of the next Labour Government is not to build socialism or even start laying the foundations for socialism, but "to raise and then *maintain* the level of investment in industry. Providing that the policies of the present Government have not led to a recession and a major loss of confidence in industry, this should not prove too difficult to achieve" (p. 12).

Thus we are informed that, contrary to all experience in Britain and every other capitalist country for the last 100 years or so, it is not only possible to "raise and *maintain*" the level of investment under normal conditions but even under conditions of "recession", "a major loss of confidence in industry" and "a situation in which the economy is not merely stagnant but seriously depressed" (p. 13). True, it is admitted that in such circumstances this would be a "little more difficult".

And how is this miracle to be achieved? By the following measures:

(*a*) Tax methods—e.g. investment allowances, or, as in the U.S.A. a quicker write-off of new capital investment.

(*b*) The gradual relaxation of the high Bank Rate and the credit squeeze.

(*c*) Increased investment in the nationalised industries.

(*d*) A National Investment Board to *advise* the 500-600 largest concerns on their investment policy.

(*e*) Adequate publicity to Government reports on the economic situation and its requirements.

Here then is the whole bag of tricks—the elusive magic wand sought after for so long—which can "plan" capitalism and enable it to go "on and on and on and up and up and up" without unemployment, without inflation, without balance of trade or sterling crises and providing not only a continuous increase in the living standards of the British people, but also for the hundreds of millions in the undeveloped countries. Why bother with socialism indeed if all this and heaven too can be provided by capitalism?

Capitalist Ideas

What theoretical concepts underly such proposals? They are the same stock in trade of all reformists and revisionists—capitalist ideas imported into the Labour movement in order to maintain existing society.

The basic idea is the identity of interest between the exploiter and the exploited—the one nation idea, with emphasis on what is good for the exploiter is good for the nation. Wilson (the United States ex-Minister for War) put it succinctly: "What's good for General Motors is good for the U.S.A. and what's good for the U.S.A. is good for General Motors."

The capitalist is interested in making profit; the more profit he makes, the more he will invest, the more he invests the better it is for the workers. Hence—it is the job of the Labour Government to encourage the capitalist to make more and more profit. This is the significance of point (*a*) Tax methods. More tax relief on profit, greater opportunities for hiding profit, through "quicker write-off of new capital". If that isn't enough, then profits can be swollen still more by "moderation and restraint" on the part of the Trade Unions with regard to wage claims which, it is claimed, the Labour Government would have "the right to rely on" (p. 37).

There is just one snag. Suppose the capitalist, who is in business only to make profit, cannot see it being profitable to invest his tax-subsidised profits? This is not such a far-fetched supposition. It is the actual case in the United States despite "the quicker write-off of new capital" and low Bank Rate. It is the case here despite the lowering of the Bank Rate, the easing of the credit squeeze and the higher rate of tax on distributed than undistributed profits in operation until as recently as the 1958 Budget. In this country, in the U.S.A.

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and in most industrial capitalist countries, existing capacity is not being utilised to the full. In such circumstances, since the capitalist is in business not to provide employment or to satisfy needs but to make profit, and as the only way he can make profit is in the realisation of his output—it is understandable that he should decline to invest and further expand already under utilised capacity. What then becomes of the "Plan"? To this conundrum the "Planners" have a multi-barrelled answer.

1. The National Investment Board on behalf of the state, armed with shoals of new statistics, though powerless to compel investment by the 500-600 Corporations (since the Board doesn't own the Reserve Funds) will advise the Corporations to do so. It will appeal to their better nature to conduct their business not as capitalists but as national philanthropists. As a mighty aid to the Board in this campaign to create an army of "Do gooders", we have the suggestion that the Board's proposals be "given adequate publicity to stimulate greater awareness throughout industry and the nation of the crucial importance of investment" (p. 17).

Here we see two more favourite ideas of the reformists and revisionist theoreticians:

(i) *The State as an entity in itself,* above classes, whose sole interest is to see fair play and the good of the nation as a whole. Only such a concept could assume that the National Investment Board acting on behalf of the capitalist state would see the nation's good as differing from that of the monopolists who control the State regardless of which Party is in office.

(ii) *The denial of the class struggle* as the only means of resolving the conflict of interests between the contending classes. A belief that an appeal to reason will achieve a "fair" solution. There may have been some justification for Robert Owen to believe that an appeal to moral conscience could convert the capitalists to act against *their* capitalist interests. But we have had 150 years of experience since then to learn better. The baselessness of this assumption ought now to be obvious to the most naive from the recent experiences of the Budget Leak Enquiry, with the frank capitalist point of view "it's anti-British, but it makes sense"

2. Gradual relaxation of the credit squeeze and reduction of interest rates to encourage the unwilling investor. Between the drafting and publication day of the Labour document the Tories, not surprisingly, already had implemented this "revolutionary" idea with very little effect. As the document itself points out, two-thirds of all investment comes from internal company reserves and does not rely on the money market. Nor will many of those investors who control the remaining one-third rush to borrow for investment purposes if there is little prospect of profit returns, merely because borrowing has been made easier. Cheap money policies are desirable and helpful because they ease the burden of those who wish to acquire a home, the small businessman and the municipalities, but they have little effect on the economy as a whole in a period of economic decline.

3. If all else fails, the nationalised industries are produced as a trump card. "Fortunately, we have in the nationalised industries a group of large investing industries whose capital programmes can be directly controlled by Government decision" (p. 13).

Here at last is something definite. This one sentence exposes the whole bankruptcy not only of *Plan for Progress,* but above all of *Industry and Society* which by rejecting nationalisation made planning impossible. Here is the admission that the only guarantee that the Government could *plan* investment is through the ownership of industry. By rejecting further nationalisation Labour has handed over, not only the brakes and accelerator but the steering wheel as well, to the monopoly capitalists. It has deprived a Labour Government from being able basically to influence, let alone plan, Britain's economy—the public as well as the private sectors. For so long as the main consumer of the product of the nationalised industries are the monopolists, it is they, not the Government, who will in the long run determine the investment policies of the nationalised industries.

The nationalised industries are burdened to pay heavy compensation, to show a profit "taking one year with another"; prohibited from setting prices for their products which would enable them to accumulate reserves for investment purposes, and faced with a declining market due to the stagnation in the private sector. It is ridiculous to rely on such an encumbered and restricted "nationalised sector" expanding to an extent which would stimulate the rest of the economy.

Labour has deprived itself of the power to create conditions making planning possible. For if socialism is correctly described as a planned society it is because, by definition, socialism is a social order in which the means of production, distribution and exchange are socially owned and administered. To reject the basis of socialism, social ownership, and pretend that it is possible to plan society (a consequence of social ownership) is charlatanism.

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First Priority—Imperialism

A whole chapter in the document headed "Earning the Nation's Living" is devoted to the position of sterling foreign trade and Britain's economic relations with the under-developed countries.

The common approach of both the Labour Party and the Tories to these problems is underlined by the opening sentence *"The strength of the £ will be the first priority of our external policy"* (p. 18).

There is, of course, nothing wrong in wanting a strong currency. But the phrase "a strong £" in present conditions has a special meaning. It means a determination to maintain the £ as an international currency, to regain and maintain British imperialist domination, if not of the world (as it used to be in "the good old days") at least over a good part of it. It is this imperialist aim that lies at the bottom of most of Britain's present problems.

None of the proposals made in this chapter differs fundamentally from those of the Tories. Some indeed have already been operated by the Tory Government, e.g. stopping up the currency leaks in Kuwait and a proposal for untied loans as a cushion against new dollar shortages resulting from the United States recession. "Sir David Eccles has suggested that O.E.E.C. countries grant other member states untied loans. The country borrowing the money could spend it wherever it likes, according to its needs" (*Daily Telegraph*, 21.7.58). The aims set out in this chapter: increased exports, reduced imports, building up gold reserves, reduction of debts, balance of payments surplus and increased help to the under-developed countries, are mere wishful thinking so long as Labour maintains its support of imperialism and capitalism.

So long as the big banks and financial institutions remain in private hands they will find new ways of making holes in foreign exchange regulations. So long as Britain's foreign policy is tied to that of the U.S.A., we will always be the slave of the dollar and suffer all the effects of an American slump on our economy.

So long as we are determined to maintain the British imperialist hold on the colonies by force reserves and balance of payments will remain precarious.

We have Mr. Butler's word for it, in 1954, that but for the burden of the "defence effort" the balance of payments could be improved by £350 million to £400 million annually.

So long as £1,500 million is spent annually on arms we will lack the means to give substantial help to the under-developed countries, and instead continue the practice of robbing the colonies via the sterling balances to obtain funds for capital export to exploit the under-developed countries. (See L. Thomas's article "The Pound and the Sterling Area", *Marxism Today*. July 1958.)

An independent foreign policy, nationalisation of the banks, drastic reductions in armaments, allowing the colonial people themselves to decide what is to be done with their own surpluses and an end to the foreign occupations of their lands, could indeed help to achieve the aims set out in this chapter. But such policies (all to be found in the *British Road to Socialism*) would mean a radical break from the imperialist policies of the Government, and it would seem that this is unthinkable for the authors of this document.

The final touch of "Alice in Wonderland" in this section is the solemn promise to expand exports and restrict imports. This in the actual conditions of general capitalist decline and drastic falls in price of primary goods, when every other capitalist country is trying to do exactly the same.

There are indeed countries in this world which have a continuous record of expanding trade both in absolute terms and relative to their share in world trade—but these are socialist countries with socialist foreign policies, public ownership of industry, financial and foreign trade institutions. On this, too, the "planners" should ponder.

The Carrot replaces the Stick

The chapter dealing with prices and wages is a brilliant example of the quack methods used in compiling this document. A long list of remedies without attempting to diagnose the cause of the disease. One would have thought that any serious attempt to discuss price stability would require an attempt to explain the unique phenomenon of nearly twenty years' continuous inflation in all capitalist countries, under all possible conditions—expanding and stagnating economies, cheap and dear money policies, under Conservative, Liberal, "Socialist" or Coalition Governments.

I do not think it is so difficult to understand this reluctance to probe. For the authors' fear the outcome of such a probe. It would disclose that the reasons for this unprecedented position are to be found in imperialist aggressive policies and the growth of monopoly capitalism superimposed on the post-war conditions, following the world's bitterest and most destructive war.

The causes of inflation (on the average an annual increase in prices of 3 per cent to 5 per cent) are:

1. The Cold War. This has led to an unprece-

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dented peace-time expenditure on arms equivalent to approximately 10 per cent of our national income, and even greater expenditure by America. Such a slice of total resources (labour, material and machinery) wasted on non-marketable commodities, when accompanied by a strong Labour movement able to resist the attempt to make it pay the *full* cost by a reduction in real wages is bound to have a strong inflationary effect.

2. The Korean, Suez and other colonial wars.
3. The growth of monopoly cornering an ever-growing share of marketable commodities. This monopoly position enables the great concerns to artificially raise prices to provide themselves with super profits.

These are the main underlying causes of inflation during the past-war period throughout the capitalist world. While not all capitalist countries were directly involved to the same degree in the arms race, the Korean War, or in monopoly development, they were, nevertheless, victims of inflation because of their dependence to a greater or less degree on the major imperialist countries.

It is because Labour approved the armament expenditures, supported the Korean War and facilitated the growth of monopoly that it runs away from an analysis of the cause of inflation and ascribes it all to the Tory policy of rent increases and removal of subsidies.

These reactionary Tory measures of course aggravated the situation and should be reversed. (This, by the way, the document does not propose to do. It only promises not to impose in the future similar Government measures to raise the cost of living.) But it is puerile to ascribe the sole responsibility to Tory Government policy for the rise in the cost of living over all these years.

Because Labour is afraid to face the facts, because it is tied to the arms programme, N.A.T.O. and the American alliance, because it accepts British imperialism and is against the nationalisation of monopoly concerns, it is reduced to the hopeless proposals of being more vigorous in enforcing the Tory 1956 Restrictive Trade Practices Act, expanded production and, of course, voluntary wage restraint as the means to achieve price stability.

United States experience with its anti-Trust legislation should suffice to expose the futility of relying on a capitalist state to control monopoly growth and prices.

The second proposal also shows total disregard of experience. Expanded production leads to price increase not stability.

The main hope of the Labour planners, however, is to achieve price stability in the same direction as that of the Cohen Report. A reliance on reduction of demand due to a wages standstill, whilst production, profits and productivity rise. The only difference is the method of achieving this. Whereas the Cohen Committee relies on the big stick, Labour puts its money on the carrot. The Cohen Committee was against wage increases on the grounds of increased profits . . . so is this document. The emphasis is on increased profit being essential to increased investment, which is the main goal. The Three Wise Men opposed wage increases even if particular sections of workers increased productivity and would tolerate wage increases only if productivity rises over the whole economy. So does Labour. The document states: "But on the other hand incomes should not be exclusively related to productivity in any particular industry, for whilst the scope of raising productivity differs widely between industries, its benefits should be shared by the community as a whole" (p. 37). And again ". . . the growth of money incomes must broadly keep in step with higher productivity, *taking the economy as a whole. . . .*" (p. 37).

The entire Trade Union movement condemned the Cohen Report. It is equally certain that on the basis of experiences of "voluntary" restraint during Stafford Cripps' reign as Chancellor of the Exchequer, they will not be taken in by Gaitskell's or Wilson's fine words of "fair play" and "price truce".

Conclusion

To sum up. *Plan for Progress* contains some useful and worthwhile proposals such as reducing the barriers to East-West trade, legalisation of minimum standards of quality and safety, removal of the worst features of hire-purchase agreements and protecting the consumer from purchase of underweight and unhygienic goods. But all this does not add up to a "plan" and still less to a policy designed to achieve full employment, improved social services, higher living standards and a crisis-free economy.

The statement suffers from the weakness of all reformist and revisionist "theory". A refusal to understand the nature of capitalist society. It ignores the motive force of capitalism—that commodities are produced for profit and not for need and because of this fails to examine the real nature of capitalist accumulation or the degree of anarchy in capitalist production. It is thus led to attempt the impossible, which is to plan an economy which by its very nature is allergic to planning.

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It ignores the class nature of the capitalist state. It denies that the way to change in class society is the class struggle and is thus led to adopt Utopian aims (that is Utopian for a capitalist society) and proposes means for attaining them completely unrelated to reality.

In the preface, the document says *Plan for Progress* is the last in the series, and in one respect it is *"the key to them all"* (p. 3). It is a rusty key, rusty with age, for it is as old as reformism itself. If the key turns at all, it will disclose a cupboard bare of all socialist ideas.

The highly desirable aims set out in the pamphlet—continuous expanding economy, higher living standards, improved social services, stable prices and a crisis-free economy—if they are to be achieved even partially, will require a united Left movement strong enough to reverse the disastrous adoption of *Industry and Society* and the rejection of *Plan for Progress*.

For the full realisation of these aims the Labour movement will have to adopt policies designed to end capitalist society and start the process of building a socialist Britain. Such policies exist. They are to be found in *The British Road to Socialism*.

The Middle East and the International Oil Monopoly

John Williamson

THE present developments in the Middle East, with a new "brink of war" crisis precipitated by U.S. and British imperialism, have their roots in oil and the related economic and political considerations; plus the fact that the Middle East is the single most important strategic region in the world for Anglo-U.S. imperialism.

The *New York Times* military commentator, Hanson Baldwin, wrote, "One word sums up the primary strategic importance of the Middle East —OIL". Decisive as oil is, this is an over-simplification. The *Wall Street Journal* emphasised instead that "Britain and the U.S. are involved in what may turn out to be the most decisive battle in the explosive struggle for Middle East influence".

President Eisenhower, in defiance of the United Nations and the conclusions of its Secretary-General and Observer Team, brusquely ordered troops into Lebanon and explained afterwards to Congress that "the measures thus far taken by the United Nations Security Council are not sufficient" and thousands of U.S. troops were needed "to protect American lives" and to preserve the *status quo* of Lebanon "which has been deemed vital to U.S. national interests. . . ."

Dr. Robert Strausz-Hope, Director of the Foreign Policy Research Institute in the University of Pennsylvania, writing the feature article in the *U.S. News and World Report* in defence and explanation of U.S. military intervention, bluntly says:

> "The greatest mistake would be not to see world strategy as a whole" and to let secondary considerations "divert us from our primary object . . . strategic control of the Eastern Mediterranean . . ." Continuing, he asserts: "What happens there affects every other place and currents from far off converge upon it." Because of this, ". . . if need be, we must use force to safeguard our established strategic positions and political conceptions".

The peace forces of the world, including the initiative of the Soviet Union in pressing for the withdrawal of American and British forces from Lebanon and Jordan, together with the steadfastness of the forces of national liberation, have momentarily reduced the threat of further military invasion by the imperialists. In fact, according to C. L. Sulzberger of the *New York Times*, "our own and British troops are established in Lebanon and Jordan with no place to go" except to "hold up the remnants of a flimsy house of cards . . . doomed to collapse".

Because the world oil monopoly—comprising five U.S. and two British oil corporations—constitutes "the outstanding illustration" of that "working world government" (A. A. Berle, former Assistant U.S. Secretary of State) which actually has a decisive say in determining Governmental foreign policy, there is an intimate inter-relationship of economic and political interests in the moves of both Washington and Whitehall as far as the Middle East is concerned.

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Facts about Middle East Oil

Today the Middle East is the second largest oil-producing area in the world, with the U.S.A. in first position, Venezuela third, and the Soviet Union fourth.

The decisive oil-producing areas in the Middle East are Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Iran, Iraq, Qatar, and Bahrein—in sequence of size of production.

Before World War II the Middle East produced a mere 100 million barrels of oil a year. By 1952 this had climbed to 762 million barrels, while last year it had catapulted to 1,283 million barrels, and for 1958 production is at a rate of nearly 1,500 million barrels.

From 1939 to 1952 the output of the Middle East was to increase by 533 per cent, Venezuela by 218 per cent, but the U.S.A. by only 81 per cent.

While the U.S.A. is still the largest single producer of oil, its percentage of the world production was down to 49 in 1954, compared to 63 in 1940 or 87 in 1880.

However, on the average each oil well in the U.S.A. oozed out only 31 barrels a day in comparison with the gushing of 5,000 barrels a day in the Middle East. Furthermore, while in the U.S.A. the expectation is of one flowing well for every eight dry holes, there are areas in the Middle East where dry holes have never been experienced.

From the viewpoint of the future the proven reserves are weighted in favour of the Middle East. In billions of barrels they are: United States 28.9; Saudi Arabia 28.0; Kuwait 20.0; Iran 15.0; Iraq 13.0; Venezuela 9.9; Indonesia 2.4; Canada 1.9; Mexico 1.7; Qatar 1.5. At the 1953 rate of production the Middle East reserves would last for 80 years, Venezuela for 14½ years and the U.S.A. for 12 years.

Is Britain's Oil Supply in Danger?

The Tories and the commercial press tried to create the impression—and unfortunately succeeded among some workers at the beginning of the present crisis—that military intervention in Jordan, Lebanon and Iraq was necessary to keep Britain's industries running.

What are the facts? Western Europe, Britain, India and the Far East have been and are the natural markets for Middle East oil. These Middle Eastern countries depend on the sale of their oil for the major part of their income, and are interested in maintaining a steady sale of the oil to the West.

Among the major powers of the world only the United States and the Soviet Union have available under their own soil great deposits of oil. So that exposes any phoney claim of the Soviet Union "grabbing our oil".

In the present Middle East crisis this same false claim of "our oil supply" being threatened was made as an original argument for intervention against the successful Iraq revolution. Actually, of every ten barrels of oil received in Britain only one comes from Iraq, and even the *Financial Times* had to admit that ". . . the revolution in Iraq does not present a major threat to oil supplies for the United Kingdom, or, indeed, to any other Western country".

The *Observer* also dealt with this question. It said, "It is quite wrong to assume . . . that the British economy would collapse if we could no longer obtain Middle Eastern oil on the terms we get it at present". What did concern the *Observer* business commentator was "the danger that the companies will have to pay bigger royalties for the oil they extract", although reluctantly acknowledging that "it is probably inevitable that, in two or three years or so, they will have to pay more than half the value of the oil" to its owners.

The basis of Anglo-American imperialist concern and military action was not *access* to oil, but a combination of other economic and political considerations.

As background it is important to keep in mind the change in the relative positions of U.S. and British imperialism in their oil and other investments in the Middle East. Before the Second World War, British investments amounted to 60 per cent, compared with 30 per cent for the U.S.A. In 1955, after sharp years of struggle and manœuvring that had started in the late 'twenties, the positions were reversed: U.S. had 64 per cent, Britain 26 per cent, and the remaining 10 per cent was divided evenly between Dutch and French imperialist interests.

The most significant decision of an Anglo-American conference of oil moguls in 1928 was one that based the price of all oil on Texas Gulf quotations, thus opening the door to phenomenal profit for the oil combines in the Middle East.

Who owns Middle East Oil?

The Big Seven of the oil corporations—all Anglo-American—control 80 per cent of the non-socialist oil reserves of the world and today produce a large part of the oil consumed. The following table, based on 1954 reports, presents a vivid picture of their strength and influence. (This is abbreviated from a chart in *The Empire of Oil* by Harvey O'Connor, which has provided certain other statistics in this article.—J. W.)

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Company	*Assets (millions of dollars)*	*Profits*	*Production (millions of barrels)*	*Percentage of world production*	*Principal sources*
Standard Oil N.J. ...	4,314	585	691	13.2	U.S.A., Venezuela, Arabia, Iraq, Canada, Indonesia
Royal Dutch Shell ...	3,472	377	643	12.2	Venezuela, U.S.A., Iraq, Indonesia
Socony (Standard) ...	2,257	184	196	3.7	U.S.A., Arabia, Iraq, Qatar, Venezuela, Columbia
Gulf	1,969	183	302	5.8	Kuwait, Venezuela, U.S.A.
Texaco	1,946	226	303	5.8	U.S.A., Arabia, Bahrein, Indonesia, Canada
Standard of California ...	1,679	212	234	4.5	U.S.A., Arabia, Bahrein, Indonesia, Canada
British Petroleum ...	996	67	252	4.8	Iran, Iraq, Kuwait, Qatar

From the above it is seen that five U.S. companies have the lion's share of oil production in the capitalist world. In the Middle East the following is the position:

Iran.—Britain 40 per cent interest, British-Dutch 14 per cent, U.S. 40 per cent, French 6 per cent.

Iraq and Qatar.—Divided four ways between British Petroleum, Royal Dutch Shell, Standard Oil of N.J. and Socony Mobil, Cie Française des Petroles—each 23.75 per cent; and the remaining 5 per cent assigned to the Gulbenkian interests.

Saudi Arabia.—100 per cent American owned, divided amongst four companies: Standard Oil of New Jersey, Standard Oil of California, Texas Co. and Socony Mobil.

Kuwait.—Divided equally between British Petroleum and Gulf Oil (U.S.A.).

Bahrein.—Divided equally between Standard Oil of California and Texas Co.

Monopoly Super-profits

U.S. private foreign investment in oil in 1955 amounted to $5,792 million, which was 24 per cent of total investments in oil. U.S. investment in the Middle East today exceeds $1,700 million and its net profit after all percentage payments have been met is $1,000 million. The eight largest companies in the Middle East (the Big Seven referred to above plus Cie Française des Petroles) made a total profit in 1955 of £400 million; it will be about the same in 1958.

Typical company profits in 1957 were Standard Oil of N.J. £320 million, and Socony Mobil £88 million. For the first quarter of 1958 the *Financial Times* quotes the Royal Dutch Shell chairman as reporting a net income of £38 million, which he predicted would be "close on £160 million" for the entire year. In 1955 the Iraq Petroleum Company made a profit of £80 million. This has fallen since, but the prediction for 1958 is that it will come back close to the 1955 level.

To further emphasise the super-profits that are garnered in from the Middle East, production costs there are only 10 cents a barrel, compared with 75 in the U.S.A., but the two barrels sell for the same price. The robbery and exploitation of the Middle East oil worker is graphically seen in the 1957 profit of Aramco in Arabia, which amounted to $630 million in a turnover of a little over $800 million (*Observer*, August 3rd, 1958); and in the fact that the oil trusts make an average profit of £1,607 a year on each worker in the U.S.A. compared with £14,285 per worker in Kuwait—almost nine times as much. The Iraq Petroleum Co. makes a profit of £9,000 for every one of its 12,000 oil workers.

No wonder the *Financial Times* lamented that "the revolution in Iraq has in fact knocked out the centre of the old system" and the *Wall Street Journal* bluntly says: "Our only policy towards Middle Eastern oil is to hold on to it by force." Defence of the fabulous profits of the oil monopolies was clearly one of the decisive reasons for Anglo-American military intervention.

Strategic Considerations

But there also entered into all the Anglo-American calculations the strategic importance of the Middle East from the viewpoint of:

(*a*) Striking at the rising national liberation movement which has been sweeping the Middle East, spurred on by the examples of China, India, Indonesia and Viet Nam, in the vain hope that it can be stopped. While they shriek in the popular press about "the combined onslaught on the Mideast by Nasserism and Communism", the serious spokesmen of imperialism know this is a phoney issue. What they fear and want to oppose is the rise of independent nations that will insist

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upon owning their own natural resources and running their own affairs.

The *Manchester Guardian* correspondent from Beirut described these recent events as "the final battle for supremacy in the Middle East" which "almost certainly means that the breakwater [of Western influence] must give way" in "the face of the rising tide of Arab nationalism" and that "the logical conclusion has been reached of the train of events which began six years ago . . .". Mincing no words, Walter Lippman, American political analyst, earlier had correctly said America was "now counterposing the Arab revolution with armed force". How else explain Suez, the Baghdad Pact, U.S. invasion of Lebanon and British invasion of Jordan, the constant threats to the United Arab Republic and the turning of the Mediterranean into an American sea?

While Eisenhower, Dulles and Lodge know well that there are no Soviet troops in the Middle East, but only their own and British, they invent a new formula of "indirect aggression" which Lodge says is "hard to see with your own eyes". Under this formula they are serving an ultimatum that they will use U.S. armed force against the people of any country who exercise their right to change the government or social system.

(*b*) Also entering into the Anglo-American strategic considerations was the role of the Middle East as a base from which to try to attack the "positive neutralism" of the Bandung-Cairo nations. Already in 1956 Dulles's action in withdrawing financial help to the Aswan High Dam in Egypt had the political motivation of delivering a decisive blow to the "sinister force" of neutralism. Dulles's own biographer writes that "since the issue involved more than denying Nasser money for a dam . . . it had to be forthright, carrying its own built-in moral for neutrals".

As the Arab and other peoples of Africa intensify the fight for their own national liberation and independence, and as India becomes more and more a decisive force among the neutral nations, the Anglo-American imperialist madmen see the Middle East as a base from which to strike out against any or all of these.

(*c*) And finally, Dulles and the Tories, starting with the Baghdad Pact, always visualised the "Northern Tier" countries as a springboard for military attack against the Soviet Union. The American magazine *Foreign Affairs* wrote that these countries were of much more importance for a "counter-attack" than for defence. Militarily the imperialists have always regarded the Middle East as a convenient strategic bridgehead against the socialist countries of Europe and the national liberation movements in Asia and Africa.

The Eisenhower Doctrine

While the Eisenhower Doctrine—proclaimed on the heels of the Anglo-French military defeat and withdrawal at Suez in 1956—originally served to further replace British with American imperialist influence in the Middle East, the Tories, in fear of the growth of the forces of national liberation, have adjusted and subordinated themselves to it.

The U.S. started to orientate itself decisively to the Middle East only after World War II. The Truman Doctrine, establishing American military control over Turkey and Greece, had its strategic nose pointed to the Middle East oil fields. The years-long American fault-finding with Hungary and Rumania had oil as one of the main considerations, as it was also the obstacle that delayed for years the conclusion of a peace treaty with Austria.

Then came the efforts to entice the Arab countries into the "Middle East Command". With this not materialising, next came the Baghdad Pact, which again the overwhelming majority of the Arab countries refused to join. But the oil monopolies never gave up trying.

The political-military activity of American imperialism in the Middle East grew as oil production and super-profits mounted in this area. When the British-French were forced to withdraw their troops from Suez and admit disaster, the Eisenhower-Dulles Government stepped in with the Eisenhower Doctrine. This called for the U.S. President "to co-operate with and assist any group of nations . . . of the Middle East" and "authorised the Executive to undertake . . . programmes of military assistance . . . with any nation . . ." and also authorised Eisenhower "to employ for economic and defensive military purposes sums available".

Eisenhower in presenting it to the nation warmed over the old bogy of a "Soviet threat", and said the United Nations was not a "wholly dependable protector of freedom". This resembled the British delegate's argument in 1955 before the United Nations that Cyprus was "essential for the defence of the Arab world". But the Syrian delegate quietly asked: "Against whom is the Arab world to be defended? So far the acute problems of the Arab world have been in the dealings with the West. . . . The defence of the Arab world rests only in the final emancipation of the Arab world".

In a short time the Arab world had its fill of the Eisenhower Doctrine by both direct and indirect American aggression and interference in Syria and Jordan, as well as by attempted bribery of King Saud of Arabia. The military gangster efforts of America were so brazen that even an

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old imperialist apologist like the Tory *Daily Telegraph* felt compelled to comment:

> "The whole history of Pax Britannica affords no example of naval forces used calculatedly for diplomatic ends which can compare with the American Sixth Fleet's current movements in the Eastern Mediterranean. . . . President Eisenhower has not just taken a leaf out of Lord Palmerston's book, he has swallowed the whole volume."

In Jordan the Eisenhower Doctrine gave them Dulles Pasha in place of Glubb Pasha, as the popular Indian writer Karenjia characterised it. It is about this same Jordan that *The Times* wrote on July 25th of this year that without British troops and massive American aid "the structure must collapse".

Already in October 1957 the *Manchester Guardian* was warning that "there is now every indication that the so-called Eisenhower Doctrine for the Middle East is dead". The power of U.S. imperialism, instigated by the oil monopoly, had collided with the power of the national liberation movement of the Arab countries, supported wholeheartedly in its anti-imperialist struggles by the Soviet Union and the entire socialist one-third of the world.

The origin of this great power of the Arab liberation movement was the welding of the Afro-Asian alliance at the historic Bandung Conference, fully supported by the socialist world. From then on a new orientation was developed by the main forces of Arab liberation against imperialist domination. A positive content was injected into Arab foreign policy as against the pre-Bandung vague tendencies of anti-Western and anti-Israeli attitudes.

The Rockefeller Doctrine

With the new turn in events, the oil monopoly in the background again came forward with a new policy—the so-called Rockefeller Doctrine, a 25,000-word report, worked on for over a year by a committee headed by Nelson Rockefeller.

This was really the carrying on of an old practice. Dulles, the notorious sanctimonious hypocrite, could present the Eisenhower Doctrine in language that talked of America fulfilling "the mission of guiding the free world with which God had entrusted her". But before the Eisenhower Doctrine was proclaimed the Standard Oil Co. magazine, *The Lamp*, urged the U.S. Government to issue "a firm unequivocal public statement" declaring that "any Government which by unilateral action abrogates an agreement . . . may expect the U.S. . . . to take such economic measures . . . as the U.S. may see the circumstances warrant".

Not satisfied with this, Nelson Rockefeller himself addressed Eisenhower, urging that the U.S. "should widely and wisely make use of economic aid to those countries which we intend to draw into alliance with us". Cautioning greater flexibility than in the past, he concludes: "The way will then be open to us . . . to step up both our political price and military demands."

The Eisenhower Doctrine was obediently produced after hearing the master's voice.

No wonder that Senator Kefauver declared in the Senate: "If the past is to serve as any guide to the future, there are more than sufficient grounds to be concerned over the prospect that the major oil companies will, in point of fact, dominate our Middle East foreign policies. . . . What the oil companies wanted, the oil companies got."

With the defeat of the Eisenhower Doctrine in the Middle East, the oil monopoly via the new Rockefeller Doctrine proposed to take off the velvet glove and use the unmasked nuclear fist it had tried to cover up before. It had such choice statements as: "Our mobile forces must be so patterned as to conform to a range of possible limited wars, from conflicts with the participation of several countries, to small police actions." In blunt language it talked of the necessity "to create military units capable of effecting a quick intervention . . ." and the setting up of special units for waging "limited atomic war". No longer going to depend upon "economic aid" or the troops of unreliable allies, Wall Street imperialism intended to throw its own military weight around. Long books were written by so-called learned professors to justify the theory of "limited wars", whose distinguishing feature, according to them, is that the "national safety" of the U.S.A. does not depend on their outcome.

This Rockefeller Doctrine has been put into practice with the military invasion of Lebanon and Jordan by U.S. and British troops.

Late in 1955 the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe published a report that exposed the monopoly-rigged price system.

The oil companies shrieked against the publication of this exposure of the oil trust of the world. The *Wall Street Journal* wrote that both the oil industry and the State Department were equally opposed to its publication. The *New York Times* wrote that the State Department complained to the E.C.E. that "there is too much ammunition in it for people . . . to beat the U.S. for supposedly exerting a baleful influence on the European economy in the interests of the 'monopolies' ", while Standard Oil of California said that "the philosophy of the report is contrary to

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the policies and interests of the U.S.". The British Government agreed with the State Department.

Arab Policy in the Middle East

In contrast to this imperialist piracy of the Middle East by the international oil monopoly, supported by the U.S. and British Governments, and with Dulles "the high priest of the oil religion" (French magazine *Perspective*) at the wheel, what is the Arab policy for the region?

Arab nationalism expresses the determination of the true patriots of these nations—the intellectuals, the younger army officers, the developing bourgeoisie, the masses of the exploited workers and peasants—to rid themselves of imperialist domination and robbery. Their objectives are neither socialism nor communism. Actually the class struggle goes on, and may well sharpen as national independence is won and the workers and peasants demand improved conditions and greater democratic rights.

Nasser summarised what he called the ideals of the 1952 Egyptian Revolution as follows:

To get rid of imperialism and its agents; to eradicate feudalism; to shake off the domination of capital over the government; to establish social justice; to establish a strong national army; to set up a sound democratic life.

Equally significant was the communiqué of the Four-Power Arab Summit Conference which stated:

> "The conferees affirm that their countries are anxious to play their part in the international sphere on a basis conducive to peace, security and thrift, the friendship of nations desirous of ours on the basis of respect for each other's sovereignty, interest and policies.
>
> "The Arab nations reaffirm their determination to protect the Arab world from the harm of the cold war and abide by the policy of impartiality and positive neutrality, thus preserving their real interest.
>
> "The conference also emphasises the fact that the defence of the Arab world should emanate from the Arab world itself in the light of its real security and outside the sphere of foreign pacts."

Imperialist Domination Doomed

Despite the economic power and military aggression of the U.S. and British imperialism in the Middle East, it is doomed. Just as it has been wiped out in China and defeated in India, Korea, Viet Nam and Ghana, so it cannot hold back the sea of progress in the Middle East whose turbulent waves topple over each new claimed "last stand" of Anglo-American imperialism.

The successes of the national liberation forces of the Middle East will speed up the same process among the peoples and nations of French Africa and the Black Belt of Central and East Africa.

Among the imperialists there is also worry and despair. Some want to throw caution to the winds and unleash atomic warfare in the world. The more cautious hesitate, thinking of the consequences of other such acts of desperation.

Since America has already seen to Britain's "power", the rethinking processes in America are more important. Walter Lippman says that U.S. policy is opposing three revolutionary movements —the Russian, Chinese and Arab—"which have a potent appeal to the intellectual leaders and to the masses of backward countries".

It is these "backward countries" that are in a common peace and anti-imperialist front with the socialist one-third of the world. While it is unclear as this is written what the next Anglo-American moves will be, the mass influence of the anti-imperialist forces has momentarily halted the aggressors, but they are not yet defeated.

If Senator Fulbright calls for a drastic revision of the U.S. "inadequate, outmoded and misdirected" foreign policy, it is intended to replace it with another. While it may be less onerous, it is nevertheless intended to be an imperialist policy. In the same way that the capitalists—if forced—will make concessions to the workers but will never voluntarily stop exploitation, so it is with the imperialists in their relations with the Middle East.

What Policy Should Labour Advance?

The Labour movement in Britain has a responsibility to arouse the people to fight for a new British policy towards the Middle East. The immediate need is the withdrawal of all British and American troops.

The longer-range policies include:

- Recognising the right of these newly established nations to own and run their own industries;
- Establishing equitable but profitable trade relations with the objective of helping these countries to become markets for British products;
- Developing trade union and cultural exchanges with the countries of the Middle East;
- Breaking the U.S.-British alliance with its aggressive military policy in the Middle East and interference in all aspects of British affairs, and developing friendly relations with the independent peoples and nations of the Middle East.

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The Nature of Music

Thomas Russell

SINCE the last war, art music has begun to play so large a part in the lives of many people that it is more than ever necessary to consider the relationship of music to life, what meaning it may have, and how that meaning is to be appreciated. Without an understanding of this kind listening to the greatest music can degenerate into an almost valueless experience in which the figure of the soloist, the conductor or the highly publicised character of a particular composer may assume disproportionate importance.

This is in fact what is largely happening, and audiences are persuaded by publicity and by a good deal of so-called music criticism that this is the aim of public performances. Consequently, the average listener has no guide in his approach to music and too often is satisfied to "like what he knows", thus narrowing his listening to a limited number of works of a given period which he will hear over and over again, while he avoids new musical experiences if they appear likely to go beyond his present knowledge. As often as not, he will go to a concert or opera with his mind made up, for prior publicity has advised him of the qualities of artists and music, and will have inhibited him from deciding for himself.

As for the critics, they have seldom the time or the space to grapple with the problems of the art upon which they live, even when their technical and historical knowledge might enable them to recognise these problems as they meet them. They themselves are too occupied with current fashions, and tag behind the latest social fads and fancies (usually created for commercial reasons) which make a lion of one composer and ignore most of the others. And composers, or many of them, are too often content to express their own personalities through their music, without understanding that the greatest composers are great precisely because they have succeeded in expressing the essential feelings, emotions and thoughts of their time, of which their heightened sensitivity as artists has made them more keenly aware. They are able to express themselves only in so far as they succeed in identifying themselves with the human needs of their contemporaries.

While musicology has done valuable work at certain levels, it has said little about the nature of music, and where earlier societies, especially the Greeks, associated certain effects with certain kinds of music, this has never been fully developed. Western music, with its three or four hundred years of artistic development, has yet to be examined as a whole, with decisive conclusions being drawn from it. In this article I shall not draw many conclusions, and shall inevitably pose more questions than I shall answer. But if the questions are correctly posed, the answers should result from a closer examination of the material concerned.

Music in History

The over-all historical sense of music needs attention from the beginning. This reveals a continuous development from the earliest days when music was functional in one way or another. Before it became an art it was a necessity. Songs of work, play, joy, sorrow, fear or courage, arose in response to the demands of everyday life. They were not composed in any modern sense of the word. The lullaby of a nursing mother was no more than the enlightened form of the mother's self-musing on her sorrows or joys, on her hopes and fears for the child's future. Its function was to soothe the child, and although it might provide an outlet for the mother's own emotions, it aimed to coax the child to sleep. So with other forms of early musical expression. Rutland Boughton, in his little-known book, *The Reality of Music*, and George Thomson, in *Marxism and Poetry*, have gone thoroughly into this period of development, and should be consulted.

At a later stage it was possible for a more gifted person who, no doubt, had himself been urged to sleep by such a lullaby, to invent a more developed melodic and rhythmic lullaby, using his superior skill and imagination instead of the direct necessity of the nursing mother. In doing this, he took the first steps towards becoming an art composer, even though his art did not go beyond the power to put together sixteen consecutive bars of music. His song, going the rounds, might be further improved by other musical individuals until it became generally known and accepted as a folk song, the property of a whole people.

When, in the seventeenth century, the modern forms of art music were taking shape, the links with folk music were still unbroken. The ordinary songs of the people had not only found their way

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into the churches, where even dance forms were turned to more sober use, but were a natural part of the musical language of many composers. Not a conscious part as they are of some Western composers today, but an organic part of their musical thought.

This continued to be true right up to the nineteenth and early twentieth century, but it becomes less marked as time goes on and as the composer occupies his more specialised, and therefore more separate, place in society.

It is by a consideration of the links between folk music and art music that the first steps can be taken towards discerning a meaning in music. It should be noted in passing that many musicians and writers on music have denied that music has any meaning. It has been argued that the notes and sounds themselves are all we need to consider; that music is no more than a highly intellectual exercise, in which pattern and polyphony, counterpoint and continuity replace the human values which distinguish the established musical masterpieces of the world. If this were true, any discussion on the meaning of music would be pointless, and music as a weapon in the progressive struggle of the human race would be hopelessly blunted.

At the same time it would be idle to suggest that this intellectual approach, with the experimentalism it carries with it, makes no contribution to the art. In most generations there have been musicians who, lacking the essential creative power of the composer, have nevertheless discovered new technical possibilities which, adopted and adapted by later composers, have widened this means of communication. As arid a theory as atonalism can, at the hands of a vital composer, add new force and colour to music. In his Violin Concerto, Roberto Gerhard employs this and other technical principles, and welds them all into a vivid whole. But it is not such theories and techniques which directly concern the mass of listeners, and it is upon their needs and desires that any ultimate criterion of musical standards must be based.

Many-sided Bach

This mental, rather than human, attitude to music comes mainly from the separation of the composer from his public and from his fellow musicians. J. S. Bach did not set out to write masterpieces, but in the end he wrote an uncommon number of them. The posts he held, either at the Thomaskirche or with the Prince of Cöthen, demanded a continual flow of new compositions. As part of his contract at Leipzig he was called upon to write a regular succession of cantatas for ordinary services; for festivals it had to be an oratorio. Having composed the work, trained the obstreperous boys of his choir and instructed the instrumentalists, he would sit at the organ when the time came and guide the work through its performance. Then it would go into a cupboard while Bach prepared for the next occasion. Throughout this process, he had the musicians and congregation in mind, as well as the Church authorities who listened very carefully to ensure that he did not introduce unworthy elements into his music. It was this full, many-sided job which resulted in the enormous body of composition that had to wait almost a century before its full value could begin to be assessed.

His example was followed by most of the composers who followed him up to the nineteenth century, but then the separation began to take place. Today, most composers forsake any other active form of music-making as soon as they begin to be established in the creative field. Many of them, indeed, have never had a job of music, and their contact with the practice of the art hardly extends beyond a trifling acquaintance with the piano. They become lonely souls, moving in a narrow circle where the criticism of everyday contact with other musicians and the public is missing. They might as well live on a desert island as, indeed, some of them try to do. This intensification of the individualist element cannot fail to lead to a cerebral approach which, when it fails to succeed with the public, surprises only the composer himself.

A study of the music of those composers who, like Bach, Haydn, Mozart and others who wrote for a practical purpose and took part in the fulfilment of that purpose, reveals unfailingly the links between popular music and art music. A very clear and simple example is offered by Schubert, a composer who worried little about theories, but who wrote for his own pleasure and for that of his friends. His song, *Heidenröslein*, is so close to the folk-song style that it might well have been no more than an artistic elaboration of a popular tune. By those who ignore its authorship it is, indeed, often regarded as a genuine folksong.

Similar close relationships to folk music, more or less conscious, can be found in the works of many composers of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, especially in the case of the Russians, with whom the process continues up to date. There is nothing precious in this use of folksong and the folksong idiom. It is reflected in the music of composers who have been brought up on the folk music of their own country as surely as local idioms and expressions are reflected in their manner of speech.

What is important is the use to which they put this link with the people. The expressiveness of their music depended very largely on this heritage. Composers took from their childhood associations

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certain expressive figures and phrases and, while they were generally accepted, made them characteristic of their own personal style.

In a recently published book on J. S. Bach by Andre Pirro, the following remark refers to such characterisations:

> "In the lamentation theme Bach uses the descending chromatic sequence which is so persistently used by masters of the seventeenth century to depict grief. In the theme of joy he uses a rhythmic formula of equal significance."

Words and Music

Mozart can be said to employ the same technique. In his music is a wealth of material for the investigator. It has been found that he frequently uses similar musical phraseology in his operas and in his purely instrumental compositions. In the former he is, of course, directly expressing the meaning of words, which he does as accurately as has ever been done in music. It can be seen that a detailed examination of these similarities can go a long way towards elucidating some of the mysteries of musical expression, for what Mozart expressed in conjunction with words can be taken as a guide to the emotions he was expressing by similar phraseology in his symphonies and other instrumental works. Little investigation has been carried out in this particular field, where there is a wide scope for the enterprising musicologist.

This reference to the conjunction of words and music must be accompanied by a warning against confusing the two media or of mistaking the meaning of one for the other. In commenting on an article of mine a correspondent asserted that:

> "Tin Pan Alley songs reflect the hack's ideas on love, skiffle the hardships and joys of working-class Southerners, white or black.
>
> "National anthems express patriotism—or king-worship—and Beethoven's Ninth Symphony is far more important to us than his Fifth, because of its uniquely moving and profound ideas on the brotherhood of man."

This is a clear example of taking the words for the music. If the writer, in speaking of Tin Pan Alley songs, includes both the words and the music within the term "songs", as undoubtedly he does, his interpretation of their joint meaning may be accurate; but if we are considering the nature of music and what meaning it can convey, the inclusion of words falsifies the whole question. This is made even more obvious when we go on to his second paragraph. The fact that he can in the same breath claim that national anthems express patriotism or king-worship, that is, a noble virtue or an outmoded superstition, proves how vague and contradictory can be such music, even when allied to words. But divorced from those words, what will the music mean?

To serious Socialists, the associations of the last thirty years or so may have detracted from the moving quality of "The Red Flag", but in the heyday of idealist socialism this song inspired many and put good heart into them. Yet, in its original form as a sentimental, even maudlin German song about a fir tree, it had as little revolutionary fervour as the current Labour "shadow" Cabinet. But with a change in interpretation and a brisking up of the rhythm it acquired a new quality which the new words made even more obvious.

This is a very simple example, but the principle can be extended to the Ninth Symphony of Beethoven. Dismissing for the moment the provocative question of whether this work has a "uniquely" moving quality, there is every reason to protest against the claim that it possesses "profound ideas on the brotherhood of man". This is an obvious instance of the confusion between words and music. Had Beethoven employed other words than those of Schiller's *Ode to Joy*, or had he decided against making it a choral symphony at all (and he was not always sure of his ultimate intention) the music of this Symphony, and especially of the last movement, would still have been fine and full of nobility, but might equally have expressed any other of the fine and noble sentiments of which human beings are capable. The attempt to give a specific meaning to this work, or to any other, can get in the way of an understanding, and even prevent it. Composers themselves often mislead us in this way by giving titles to their works or by purporting to tell a story in a piece of programme music. It is true that they may follow the rough lines of the story they set out to illustrate, but any listener who has not been informed of the composer's intentions, and who is in the habit of reading a story into the music he hears, may quite as easily provide an entirely different illustration which will fit the music no less accurately.

Expressive Powers

Whereas some composers, as I mentioned earlier, deny the expressive powers of music, so others claim that it can express explicit ideas. Neither of these claims appears to be valid. Certainly, if a composer could express his ideas explicitly, there would be little point in his having recourse to words as an ally. And if it were true, it would detract rather than add to the special privileges which music has over any other art. The unique power of music is that, by its wealth of association with the past of the individual and of the people as a whole, it can arouse the complete gamut of human emotions in a manner which enables the individual

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listener to interpret the music in his own personal way.

At a meeting I attended recently, one of the speakers in the discussion denied that music could be revolutionary, defeatist or have any other definite emotive power. Fortunately, another speaker with a wide knowledge and experience of listening proved the reverse in positive terms. He contrasted the music of Delius, Beethoven and Tchaikovsky, all composers for whom he had a special affection. He recognised that the music of Delius had a debilitating effect if taken in large doses. With the possible exception of *The Mass of Life*, the music of this composer was little more than an extension of his own personal feelings and prejudices. He wrote for himself and seldom had the power to externalise this personal attitude and make it universal in the way that the greatest composers have done. He was unable to translate his personal ideas and emotions to a higher common level.

In the music of Tchaikovsky the same personal approach can be found, but despite the obsession with his own personal problems which characterised his life his genius was powerful enough to present those very problems through his art in a manner which unfailingly calls forth an echo in the listener. However profound the grief and sorrow he expresses in his music, they become transmuted into terms which any listener can appreciate and interpret for his own purpose. Beethoven may have been personal in his manner, but the content of his music is as universal as the poetry of Shakespeare. Within it, everyone can find satisfaction at his own level.

From the resignation and escapism of Delius, through the heavy emotionalism of Tchaikovsky to the virile, muscular energy of Beethoven, can be seen a glimpse of the varied possibilities of musical expression. The comparison is not intended to condemn Delius, any more than other forms of relaxation are to be condemned. Few people can live perpetually at the high level of moral purpose set by Beethoven, or in the profundity of human emotions plumbed by Tchaikovsky. An intelligent listener will choose the music he needs at any time, just as he will consciously or unconsciously choose the friends he needs in any particular situation. And in music the range is limitless.

If the conjunction between words and music is likely to be misleading in the study of the nature of music, as I have suggested, a comparison between music and most of the other arts can be no less so. Speech, poetry and music may have derived originally from the same source, but since the parting of the ways each has developed its own characteristics to an extent which now makes comparison almost pointless. And in the graphic arts, even those most removed from everyday reality do not possess the positive abstractness of music which makes it so rich in interpretative possibilities. Perhaps the most valid comparison would be with architecture, and it is often useful to consider music in architectural terms.

Music and Architecture

In both arts a successful creation implies a unity of form and content, of shape and purpose; any discrepancy between the two invalidates a whole work. Even such a great artist as Beethoven could not make a formal success of a work based on a content proposed by someone else and in which he did not believe. "Wellington's Victory, or the Battle of Vittoria" had a triumphant success in the particular period of its composition, but it was the lapse of a genius, tempted by temporary considerations to undertake a task in which he had no faith. If the story of the "Eroica" Symphony is true, and Beethoven erased the dedication to Napoleon when the liberator became an Emperor, it revealed the artist searching for permanent values and hammering out a form to contain them.

Any visitor to India can find striking examples of architecture to develop this argument. In Calcutta, Lord Curzon built a Victoria Memorial with the aid of funds provided by the Princes. It was designed, and well designed, too, to combine the arts of East and West. In a city where a large proportion of the population lives, loves and dies homeless in the streets, this magnificent marble erection houses galleries devoted to a display of the part Britain played in the subjugation of India and of the personalities involved. The incongruity of this content strikes most visitors. Those from the Soviet Union ask why such a splendid building is not used to serve some human purpose; those from the U.S.A. disapprove vaguely, perhaps because they begrudge the British even the past glories of the British Raj; Australians and other youthful members of the Commonwealth wax loud in their enthusiasm, while Indians with ten years of independence behind them wonder what it all means.

At Agra, however, there is the Taj Mahal, peerless in its architecture and perfect in the symmetry which leads to the central purpose. This masterpiece was erected by the Shah Jehan in fulfilment of a promise made to his dying wife. She asked him to care for their children, never to remarry, and to build for her the most beautiful memorial in the world. He kept all three promises, and the Taj is partial evidence. No visitor, as he is led unerringly by the architectural plan to the tomb itself, can fail to appreciate the essential identity of form and content, and the common human emotion behind the structure is universal in its appeal.

Just as architectural form can be magnificently disproportionate to its content, or ignominiously

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inadequate to its content as in a slum, so can the form of a musical composition take on an importance quite out of keeping with what a composer has to say. Emphasis on form and manner is a sure sign of sterility and of the separation of the composer from his colleagues and from the public he serves. The Victoria Memorial of Calcutta is a reminder of this. It is for this reason that "formalism" is deprecated in any society where the artist is seen as the servant and leader of the people as a whole. It can be a sign, too, that the society itself has not reached the point of stability at which the artist is part and parcel of the social structure and not in any way alien to it.

Music Interpreted

Music is different from all other art forms in that it can rarely be directly enjoyed. The composer writes by means of a series of signs which, at the best, can only approximate to what he wishes to convey. Only to a highly trained musician can these signs mean what the composer has in mind; even then, without the aid of a musical instrument, this appreciation is still more approximate. Before the musical ideas are brought to life an interpreter is needed; he may be a singer, an instrumentalist or a conductor. Until it is performed the music is dormant, almost non-existent.

This very approximation makes the role of the interpreter important for better or worse. The interpretation can not only be negatively bad but may be positively so and distort the meaning of the music. Numerous instances can be found to illustrate this danger. It is possible that, when the interpreter himself has creative abilities, he may add qualities to the music which the composer had never suspected, but which, having heard, he approved.

The interpretative role is not yet the whole of the story. The music, if it is to fulfil the composer's aims, must have a listener. And this is where the dialectics of music are involved. Those who believe that music has a specific meaning, appreciated by all, will begin to disagree with me here. For them, each piece of music has a meaning, a meaning which can be perceived by all men. This I doubt. I doubt it to the extent of believing that no two people hear the same music in exactly the same way, that each takes from it something modified by his personal, social and historical background. If this were not so, how could we explain the fact that members of societies based on opposing ideologies can listen and appreciate the same works, interpreted in the same manner? If music meant precisely the same thing to both it would be as ridiculous as the spectacle of two combatants engaged in a deadly war, praying to the same god and confidently expecting him to come down on their particular side.

The apparent anomaly can, however, be explained if we agree that music has only a broad emotional meaning and that it has a power, greater perhaps than any other art, of influencing and affecting the emotions. This power cannot be estimated objectively, unless account is taken of the subjectivity of the listener which, in itself, is a definite factor.

Every great musical work, whenever and for whatever purpose it was written, expresses a range of emotions which are common to all human beings at one level or another. The particular level depends on the receptiveness of the listener, and this depends in turn on all that goes to make up the cultural norm of the society to which he belongs. Thus, although the reaction of members of varying societies may appear to be the same, for the basic human emotions are common to both, what the listeners take away from the experience will bear a close relationship to what they bring to it. If a people who have accepted fascism and all that it connotes pay for their music with the debased currency of fascist degeneracy, they cannot take away more than value for their money. Only in a communist world will the full and complete appreciation of art, and especially of music, be possible.

This is not to suppose that we have to wait patiently for the great day of musical enlightenment. Individuals, like societies, have internal problems and contradictions to face; music, more keenly experienced, more clearly understood, can provide the impetus for the solving of these contradictions. Music can stretch across the centuries, so that Bach writing for a Christian community with a feudal background can conquer the minds and emotions of a generation which is no longer Christian and to which feudal relationships have no more living significance than the totem pole.

It may well be that in a perfectly integrated society music would come very near to having a definite meaning, understood in closely similar terms by all people. Until such a society is brought into existence the questions I have raised will have to be answered, not in the hysterically subjective manner of Pozdnyshev in Tolstoi's *Kreutzer Sonata* when, after demanding: "Just what is music? What is it? I don't understand. What does it do to a person? And why does it do it?" he concludes that music "neither elevates nor abases; it merely excites".

Tolstoi demonstrated what the Beethoven sonata meant to a deranged member of a corrupt society, but by this very example he showed what it can mean to those who believe in a higher goal for humanity and who are striving to achieve it.

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The Aged

L. Kessel

ALTHOUGH imperialist Britain has succeeded over the centuries in "exporting" many of its problems and social miseries to the colonial territories, the problem of its aged people—of no further use for producing profit—has always remained at home, and now bids fair to become an important touchstone of the capacity of capitalism to provide for the people who live within its system, just as the unemployment rate has always been.

The place of old people—which today appears a new problem—has always been conditioned by the social relations of society, and has changed throughout history. The honour and prestige bestowed upon the aged for the special wisdom of their experience was a feature of many tribal groups. We find, for example, many expressions to confirm this attitude throughout the Old Testament, and in ancient China ancestors were worshipped and old people were regarded with the very deepest respect. There are examples in other tribal societies of an opposite tendency: for instance, the Kaieteur waterfall in British Guiana is reported to derive its name ("Kaieteur" means "old man") from the practice in ancient times to place those old men who could no longer support themselves, into a canoe to drift over the waterfall to die. Generally the evidence seems to suggest that within tribal society, the attitude to the aged was one of veneration where the economy was agrarian, and obliteration where the mode of life was principally dependent on hunting.

In feudal Britain there was a pattern of village community, based on the techniques and means of production in which the old no less than the young fitted into place. An aged craftsman who owned the tools of his trade could go on working for many years past the time when his labour at a powered loom or lathe would be considered uneconomical by the new factory or mill-owner. The development of capitalism altered the whole attitude towards the old. As soon as a man or a woman became unable to use the available machinery to its fullest and most profitable extent, they became a liability and therefore had to go. New industries sprang up in various parts of the country and had to attract labour, and young people moved away from their homes to follow work. The old people, on the other hand, found it difficult to abandon their homes for doubtful employment where they might be refused work because of their age, and tended to remain behind.

When early capitalism broke up the pattern of the village community, causing the disbandment of feudal armies and large monasteries, a vast body of unemployed wanderers came into being, amongst whom were not only the "sturdy beggars" but children and old people. At first, methods of terror were tried to "eliminate" this social problem; ears were lopped off and when the problem persisted, there were mass hangings. But despite persecution and execution, poverty remained and people continued to grow old. Finally, in 1601, the Poor Law was passed in an attempt to keep the poor and the aged rooted in their own parishes. There was no charity in this, only the naked interests of the new ruling class. In the early nineteenth century poverty was a crime; saving was a virtue and old people who had not managed to save sufficient for their needs in their old age were treated with the scantest charity—"pour encourager les autres". Many thousands of old people in the nineteenth century were living in the appalling conditions disclosed in the works of Engels, the Hammonds, Rowntree and the Webbs. The basic poor law concept was clearly expressed by Chadwick in 1834:

> "By the Workhouse system is meant having all relief through the workhouse . . . making the workhouse an uninviting place of wholesome restraint, preventing any of its inmates from going out or receiving visitors, without a written order to that effect from one of the Overseers; disallowing beer and tobacco, and finding them work according to their ability; thus making the parish fund the last resource of the pauper, and rendering the person who administers the relief the hardest taskmaster, and the worst paymaster, that the idle and dissolute can apply to."

It should be noted that these conditions existed not only for vagrants but for the "crippled old men and women who could never hope to leave it. . . ." (J. L. and Barbara Hammond, *The Bleak Age.*)

The Industrial Revolution

It was the violent advent of the industrial revolution which first raised the aged sections of the population to the category of a special problem requiring a social solution based on harsh economic reality, and uninhibited by finer moral or ethical considerations.

The years of the "welfare state" have not made any changes to the fundamental social inequalities within capitalism, but the stimulus of victory over fascism and the years of relative full employment

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which followed provided an opportunity for a vast amount of social study of the "underprivileged" amongst whom the aged are the most important. Sociologists, politicians, doctors and other experts have done a lot of practical work and theoretical study, mostly—but by no means all—designed to squeeze a few more coppers from a reluctant Exchequer. We have thus the interesting contradiction of a host of well-meaning experts who generally uphold capitalism but whose devotion to the cause of the aged set them in practical opposition to the system. The work of these experts has been stimulated by, and has in its turn assisted, the drive of the organised Labour movement, and in particular the organisations of the old folk themselves, for better pensions and social services for the old people.

Comprehensive surveys, on a national basis like that of the Nuffield Foundation and locally like those in Bristol, Wolverhampton and elsewhere, reveal the appalling plight of the aged, in particular the aged sick, in our "welfare" state. Though the old people are certainly still a depressed minority, they are now no longer forgotten. In Salford a complete survey of every man and woman over sixty-five has been reported on. In 1950, the official Labour Party Speakers' Handbook concluded that "The aged have not yet come into their rightful heritage". Few would quarrel with this except as a glib understatement in face of the heartbreaking facts disclosed by the various surveys and confirmed in the daily life of every medical practitioner and thousands of working-class people.

One survey of the aged sick describes a typical hospital ward in a Withington, Manchester, hospital: "Twenty-four people, twelve a side, waiting to die, with forty-eight more waiting to occupy their beds after they die." This is in Britain in the mid-twentieth century.

In New York State the number of those over sixty-five admitted to mental hospitals has increased five times between 1920 and 1940. The suicide rate in Britain, thought to be by no means one of the highest, shows a very clear peak in old age. There is no doubt that increasing loneliness and isolation of old people has played an important part in taking them to mental hospitals.

It is fashionable in certain quarters to claim that this generation of young people are no longer prepared to care for the old. This statement was not borne out by the evidence provided by any of the surveys. Townsend says that 10 per cent of old people in this country are looked after by their relatives at home at the cost of more or less considerable hardship. Difficulty of housing, the need for wives to work, re-housing of young people in new housing estates with no room for ageing relatives, have all increased the difficulties. In the Guillebaud report Titmus showed that two-thirds of hospital beds were occupied by those over sixty-five and that the majority were single, widowed or divorced.

The inference of the Labour Party statement: " . . . not yet . . ." is that we may expect the aged to come into their rightful heritage given more social reforms of the Labour Party pattern. But, " . . . not yet . . ." suggests a tendency which the facts do not confirm. An almoner in a large London geriatric unit, speaking from great practical experience, states that the trend is in the opposite direction: "In general, it would seem that life is becoming increasingly difficult for the elderly under conditions of modern civilisation."

Whenever the policies of the Establishment lead to misery, there Charity is to be found. To the discomfiture of many conservative-minded men and women who spend their time in bringing "comforts to the aged", official Tory policy and semi-official Tory propagandists occasionally allow themselves an indiscretion in which the true attitude of the ruling class to the aged and unproductive section of our community becomes plain for all to see. When this cat is let out of the bag, it turns out to be not at all a little comforting kitten but a wild-cat, clawed and toothed.

The Malthus Theory

Dr. Ffrangcon Roberts, in *The Price of Health* which received laudatory reviews in the Tory press and editorial comment in the *Daily Telegraph*, blandly put it thus:

> "The modern medical profession, still framing its ethics on the dubious statements of an ignorant man who lived more than 2,000 years ago, continues to believe it has a duty to keep alive as many people as possible."

His book is a cynical defence of the theory (his own derived from Malthus) that society has no place for unproductive old people kept alive in a state of "medicated survival".

The Tory politician with an eye on the electorate puts the issue less crudely, but no less clearly, in economic rather than ideological terms: ". . . the charge on the nation's resources which the aged represent must be kept within reasonable bounds" (*The Care of the Aged*, Conservative Political Centre pamphlet, Kenneth Thompson, M.P., John Vaughan-Morgan, M.P., Angus Maude, M.P.).

The fear that the proportion of old people in our community will become well-nigh unmanageable appears to be haunting some sociologists and economists.

It is, however, more usual for the present-day Tories for reasons of political expediency in the face of a strong Labour movement, to disguise their traditional and fundamental policy with regard to the aged, unproductive and poor.

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Not only has each form of society developed a characteristic attitude to its aged members but the very concept of old age is itself constantly changing.

When is a person old? At the biblical three-score-years-and-ten? When he can no longer work? At some given age determined on actuarial grounds for pension purposes? These are important questions not only for the Labour movement today but for a socialist Britain tomorrow. In Britain today you are old at sixty if you are a woman and at sixty-five if you are a man. That is at any rate a legal fact, whatever the lack of social or biological grounds. The proportion of older and younger sections in any community will vary according to the birthrate and the expectation of life. The average male child born in Britain today may expect to live until he is sixty-seven, the average female child until she is seventy-two. In the British Empire things are very different—in Nigeria, for instance, only half the children born each year survive their *fifth* birthday. In Britain 90 per cent of people live to be sixty-five years old; in Kenya more than 90 per cent live only to the age of forty-five. *It can be said that we are living the years of our maturity in time stolen from the lives of the subject peoples in our colonial territories.*

The cynic might well comment at this stage that since it is such a remarkable feat to survive to old age in the territories of our Empire, it is not surprising to find the aged African honoured amongst his people, whereas here the aged only constitute a social problem!

The Problem in Britain

Let us take a look at this "problem" in Britain today. Whereas the average male child born today may expect to live to the age of sixty-seven, when the first Co-operative store was opened just over a century ago, the average expectation of life for a boy was forty.

The proportion of the population whose age is between fifteen and sixty-four, the important working years, is steadily dropping each decade, so that in Tory economic terms the alarm is raised that "in twenty-five years' time every man and woman at work will be devoting more than twelve hours a week to producing goods and services for consumption by old people who have retired from work" (*The Care of Old People*, Conservative Political Centre). The authors hasten to add that this may be "a most unfair and tendentious way of putting the case", and one might add that for the Conservative Political Centre to look forward twenty-five years is being not tendentious but optimistic.

Whereas there has been an astonishing and gratifying increase in the number of people who reach the age of 65, above that age the proportion in various age groups has remained remarkably stable over the last hundred years. Put in another way it means that instead of a few of us living long lives most of us may now reasonably expect to do so, but the centenarian will still be a rarity and in the future we shall be faced with growing problems of the role of the aged sections of the population, their employment, welfare and medical care.

In 1950 less than one man in three between sixty and seventy years old was known to be working. It is significant that a greater proportion of men over seventy do some work compared with the age-group sixty-five to seventy, evidently because the earnings rule which reduces a man's pension if he earns more than 50s. per week ceases to apply when he is over seventy.

Arising from all these facts, we find a number of practical questions facing us today: economic, biological, social and psychological, the most important of which are adequate pensions, suitable accommodation for the aged in homes, hospitals and institutions, and a perspective for elderly people to maintain an interest in life by working past their official pensionable age if they choose to do so.

What Has to be Done

The solution must come under four headings: pensions, employment, housing and medical care. Adequate pensions for all workers at a fixed age would immediately remove a great part of the problem. Nor should we any longer countenance the limitations of the right of a man or woman to work after the time of retirement without any reduction of pension. It may be necessary to vary the pension age in different occupations, *but the time has come for the trade union movement to revise its whole attitude towards the question of employment after pensionable age.* One of the saddest things about growing old in our community today is the feeling of uselessness, of having no place in the community. As long as the old worker is made to feel that he is kept out of responsible positions or being used as dilution of labour he must inevitably feel that society no longer wants his labour or himself.

There is some evidence that the older worker could find new responsibilities in the development of automation. Some employers are already reported to have said that they would prefer to have an older man, steady and experienced, in charge of a complicated switchboard than a younger worker whose greater physical vigour may be offset by less concentration or sense of responsibility.

All kinds of experiments in housing have been carried out, but because of the economies imposed

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on the local authorities they have done little more than touch the fringe of the problem. There is some evidence that the practice of segregating old people into separate blocks of flats, however well designed and adapted for their needs, tends to take them out of the community and adds to their isolation. Many local housing authorities believe that the best solution is to provide flats or small houses on ground level in a balanced housing estate devised in some way to be away from too much noise of children and traffic. In some schemes a residential home and sick-bay is incorporated and those who become too old or otherwise incapacitated to look after themselves can easily move into residential accommodation and still be near to their friends and perhaps relatives, and remain in the district they have come to know. The main problems of housing old people will disappear when there is sufficient housing for all. Many families who would be prepared to house their relatives find it quite impossible to do so under the present conditions.

There is no doubt that the development of geriatrics as a medical speciality has thrown focus on the medical problems of old age and has resulted in important advances in diagnosis and treatment. However, one should beware of accepting too easily the demands for more *special* clinics, *special* departments and *special* local authority centres for the care of old people. The average G.P. is quite capable of dealing with the purely medical problems of old people, particularly if working in a team based on a health centre or group practice, where all the available services can be co-ordinated. Development of day hospitals, where isolated, feeble or mildly confused people can spend the day supervised by properly trained staff, and can carry out recreational and occupational tasks, returning to their homes by ambulance at night, forms a most interesting experiment. So, too, does the practice in certain geriatric wards and old people's homes of taking old people in for short periods to allow the family to get away for a holiday, or simply give a break to an overburdened relative from exacting demands. Many mental hospitals have achieved astonishing results with old people suffering from a wide range of mental conditions. Too often the advantages of therapy are thrown away when a patient has to be retained in a mental hospital because there is nowhere for him to go or where he would be returning to poverty and isolation reproducing his original condition.

The Work of Local Authorities

There is no doubt that the best of our local authorities have through their welfare departments achieved a great deal for their old people. Well-run old people's homes, specially appointed health visitors, voluntary old people's welfare committees subsidised by the local authority, meals on wheels, chiropody clinics, laundry and library services, can all play a part in changing the life of old people from one of loneliness and misery to one of hope and interest. There is a very big gulf between what the best local authorities are doing and the worst. Although the dead hand of the Treasury lurks forever in the background, much of the finance for this work comes out of local rates and is the responsibility directly of the local councils and members of the local welfare committee. In the Salford Survey it was clearly shown that although Salford is a progressive borough with most of the possible amenities available for old people, a high proportion of the old people simply do not know of the existence of these amenities or even of their elementary rights to pensions and supplementary allowances.

The organisations developed in recent years by old age pensioners for their own protection and advancement can play an important role in this connection, by informing the old folk of their existing rights as well as organising them for every kind of improvement. These organisations have played the historical role of removing the question of old people's rights from the arena of charity to that of politics, and this is of permanent importance apart from any immediate gains that they have been able to win. Every time that an old persons' welfare organisation is removed from the control of "voluntary" charity control and placed in the hands of the pensioners themselves or their elected local authorities, a fundamental victory has been won for the dignity of old age. Local councils have now the power to take this responsibility, and many of the most advanced authorities have recently done so. The Labour movement generally is, however, not sufficiently awake to the importance of its power and duty to the aged members of the working class.

An Urgent Problem

To sum up: socialists must challenge the gloom which surrounds the prognosis of increasing longevity, and see it as a reason for optimism, and a challenge. As the numbers of old people increase, so will it become more and more urgent that they should play as active a part in society as possible. To this end the difficulties that surround the continued employment of old men and women will need to be surmounted; and improvement in pensions, housing and medical care must constantly be fought for.

The speed with which people grow old depends as much on social factors as it does on individual physical processes. Ageing is hastened by inadequate diet and housing and lowering of financial security;

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loss of interests due to compulsory retirement; loss of relatives and friends, most striking in a non-social capitalist society; loss of emotional security due to forced change of environment; loss of status owing to ceasing to be primarily a contributor to a society; and loneliness. Singly or collectively, these are responsible for much of the misery, frustration, disappointment, anxiety or depression amongst elderly people.

The capitalist system cannot ever solve the problems of old age, because it inherently tends to relegate to the scrap-heap those of its citizens who can no longer fight its wars or labour for its profit. Until recently it didn't even bother to find out how the old folk live and die.

Only socialism can bring about the necessary fundamental alteration in social relations, social responsibilities and attitudes. Given the rising material and cultural standards of a socialist Britain, our medical workers could ensure a healthy life and the quiet serenity of a healthy old age for a constantly increasing number of our people. In the achievement of such a purpose, the Labour movement will find many allies in the medical professions and amongst many other people.

Lenin and the Struggle for a Communist Party

Joan Simon

THERE was no more uncompromising critic of opportunism and revisionism in the socialist movement than Lenin, the founder of the organised Communist Party as we know it today. At the time, the opportunists Lenin was combating often quoted sentences he had written out of context, so attributing to him views very different from those he in fact held. For instance, seizing on isolated sentences from *What is to be Done*? (1902) they attempted to prove that Lenin denigrated the working class movement in favour of the intellectuals, that he underestimated the capacity of the working class to assimilate socialist ideas and wished to dictate to it from "outside"; that, therefore, he departed from Marxism. Today, in a different situation, the same extracts are selected but stressed in an opposite way; in the attempt to prove that Lenin rightly pointed out the limitations of the "spontaneous" working class movement and correctly argued that intellectuals must act as specialist guides in matters of socialist theory. Armed with phrases which seem to prove this point, today's controversialist cheerfully dismisses as un-Marxist anyone who disagrees with this "Leninist doctrine".

What did Lenin really say? In order to find out it is necessary, not merely to search his writings seeking to justify a particular argument, but to study the relevant works as a whole in relation to the context in which they were written.

Lenin himself was, of course, an intellectual; but, more significant, he was a Marxist. As such he accepted the fundamental principle of historical materialism that the class struggle is the motive force of social development; that, under capitalism, the consciousness, unity and discipline developed by the working class in the process of the class struggle is the primary condition of the advance to socialism. In the period 1902-4 he was first and foremost arguing the case for the establishment of a new kind of socialist party which, *taking into account* this basic principle of historical materialism, armed with Marxism, was so organised as to prosecute the class struggle *in the most effective way*.

The arguments he advanced were, however, framed in the context of a discussion about the contemporary situation in Russia and the international socialist movement; framed to refute specific opportunist positions, specific attempts to revise Marxism in this or that direction. This makes it difficult to study them. But the effort is well worth while because so many of the points Lenin made—as well as his whole approach to problems—are as fundamental today as ever they were.*

* The two chief works concerned are *What is to be Done*? and *One Step Forward, Two Steps Back*. These, together with the shorter articles printed in Volume II of the *Selected Works* cover the whole controversy leading up to the key Second Congress of the Russian Social-Democratic Party and the division between the Bolsheviks (or majority) and the Mensheviks (or minority). The significance of Lenin's contribution, and of the controversy as a whole, is well summarised in a pamphlet by Stalin published in 1905, *Briefly about the Disagreements in the Party* (*Works*, Vol. I).

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In order to get these arguments into perspective it is first necessary to stress the basic Marxist position set out in the *Communist Manifesto* which Lenin tended to take for granted; that the class struggle in the capitalist era, the struggle between the two great contending classes the proletariat and the bourgeoisie, *inevitably leads to social revolution, towards socialism.*

In the *Manifesto* Marx and Engels also described their own position in the historical movement they had disclosed:

> "In times when the class struggle nears the decisive hour, the process of dissolution . . . within the whole range of old society assumes such a violent, glaring character that a small section of the ruling class . . . joins the revolutionary class, the class that holds the future in its hands . . . in particular a portion of the bourgeois ideologists, who have raised themselves to the level of *comprehending theoretically the historical movement as a whole*" [My italics. J.S.].

Communist Ideas are not Invented

Elaborating this point, Marx and Engels went on to show that theoretical principles, Communist ideas, are not invented but "merely express, in general terms, actual relations springing from the existing class struggle, from a historical movement going on under our very eyes"; in other words, the social movement is primary, ideas and theories about it are secondary, deriving from, generalising, the facts. But, being *dialectical* materialists, Marx and Engels also stressed the vital importance of theory added to practical experience of the struggle:

> "The Communists . . . are on the one hand, practically the most advanced and resolute section of the working class parties of every country, that section which pushes forward all the others; on the other hand, theoretically, they have over the great mass of the proletariat the advantage of a clear understanding of the line of march, the conditions and the ultimate general results of the proletarian movement."

Lenin never departed one iota from this Marxist position. On the contrary, he was consistently concerned to stress it in opposition to vulgarisers who, in the interests of a particular policy, stressed only one aspect of it or the other. Thus Lenin is found upholding the Marxist position, first, in answer to Social-Democratic intellectuals who extolled the activity of the working class movement and denigrated theory and policy as superfluous; and in this case he necessarily stressed the vital importance of theory, of introducing Marxism to the working class movement, and the role that intellectuals played in this. Secondly, Lenin upheld the Marxist position against the intellectuals when, at a later stage, they began to uphold their own theories and policies in violation of Congress decisions; and then, necessarily, he stressed the lessons which the working class had to teach the intellectuals in respect of discipline and organisation. It is obvious that there could be no more un-Marxist procedure than to extract sentences from either of these arguments of Lenin's in order to hold them up as the essence of Marxism.

In *What is to be Done*? Lenin joined issue with a trend which was loosely termed "economism", a term which covered various forms of opportunism then current. He had originally intended to develop in a positive way ideas lately advanced by the revolutionary grouping around the newspaper *Iskra*; plans for clarifying the character and content of political agitation, for strengthening organisation and for setting up a militant party on an all-Russian scale. But these ideas had met with criticism which brought to light two fundamentally antagonistic trends in the Social-Democratic movement. Instead, therefore, of developing and discussing detailed points of policy it was necessary to begin at the beginning and argue the need for a policy formulated in the light of Marxism; to deal exhaustively and systematically with this fundamental question.

The Need for a Communist Party

Lenin's book, therefore, became a detailed and trenchant examination of attempts to substitute "new" theories for the "outdated" philosophy of Marxism, attempts to justify a retreat from the realities and demands of the class struggle. At the same time it was a cogent argument for a new kind of Social-Democratic organisation, what was to become the Communist Party. Up to this time in Russia, circles of middle class intellectuals had virtually had a monopoly both of political experience and socialist theory, and to this extent had been the guiding brains of the socialist movement. Lenin's overriding aim was to supersede this kind of guidance, with all its attendant dangers, once and for all; to establish an organised political leadership of the working class movement. At the same time it was his immediate concern to persuade the intellectuals that it was their duty to bring their knowledge and experience to the Labour movement for the purpose of establishing the necessary vanguard party of the working class.

He began by examining complaints about the "ossification of the party", attacks on dogmatism coupled with demands for freedom of criticism. He showed that the criticisms of "obsolete doctrinaire" Marxism amounted, in reality, to re-

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jection of the theory of the class struggle and the need for the dictatorship of the proletariat. This kind of criticism had, of course, been advanced in most countries for decades; from political platforms, university chairs, in innumerable pamphlets, so that the younger generation of the educated classes had been systematically trained in this tradition. This, then, was no "new critical" tendency as its upholders sought to suggest; it was nothing but the transference of bourgeois ideas into socialist literature and policy, the corruption of the socialist consciousness of the working class.

> "He who does not deliberately close his eyes cannot fail to see that the new 'critical' tendency in socialism is nothing more or less than a new species of *opportunism*. And if we judge people not by the brilliant uniforms they deck themselves in, not by the imposing appellations they give themselves, but by their actions, and by what they actually advocate, it will be clear that 'freedom of criticism' means freedom to convert Social-Democracy into a democratic reformist party, the freedom to introduce bourgeois ideas and bourgeois elements into socialism" (*S.W.*, Vol. II, pp. 32-3).

What were the consequences of this retreat from scientific socialist theory? In practice it meant thoughtless eclecticism (a confusion of "theories" picked up from various sources and applied piecemeal). This, in turn, inevitably meant subservience to bourgeois ideas and a drawing back from the organised political struggle. It was in this situation that some socialists attempted to evolve new theories to justify the retreat; "theories" upholding the purely economic struggle—what they chose to call the "spontaneous" mass action of the working class in trade union activities and strikes—as the truly revolutionary way forward. Theorising and leadership from "outside", it was argued, only interfered with the natural development of this movement. Had not Marx himself insisted that "a single step of the real movement is more important than a dozen programmes"?

This argument, advanced at a moment when the working class movement was developing rapidly and reaching outwards to the political arena, represented an abdication from the fight, as Lenin pointed out. To leave the working class unaided, in the narrow struggle with the employers, was in practice to deliver it up to bourgeois ideas and aims which were still all-pervading and propagated in innumerable ways. The only real choice was between bourgeois ideology and socialist theory; there was no third way which the working class could find by its own efforts in the industrial field. By refusing to take socialist theory to the developing mass struggle, by failing to agree on a programme and tactics, the critics were tailing behind events. The strength of the socialist movement lay in "the awakening of the masses (principally, the industrial proletariat)" while its weakness was precisely this "lack of consciousness and initiative among the revolutionary leaders".

Trade Union Consciousness

Here Lenin examined the past history of socialism to illustrate that advanced socialist theory must be introduced to the active Labour movement in an organised way; and, too, that steps in this direction had been taken in Russia in the past:

> "The history of all countries shows that the working class, exclusively by its own effort, is able to develop only trade union consciousness, i.e. it can itself realise the necessity for combining in unions, for fighting against the employers and for striving to compel the government to pass the necessary labour legislation."

The theory of socialism, on the other hand, was developed by men acquainted with the whole range of modern knowledge and in a position to advance that knowledge. This theory

> "grew out of the philosophic, historical and economic theories elaborated by educated representatives of the propertied classes, the intellectuals. According to their social status, the founders of modern scientific socialism, Marx and Engels, themselves belonged to the bourgeois intelligentsia".

So also, in Russia, Social-Democratic theory

> "arose quite independently of the spontaneous growth of the labour movement . . . as a natural and inevitable outcome of the development of ideas among the revolutionary socialist intelligentsia".

Subsequently, Marxism had been absorbed mainly by the educated youth while the Labour movement, in spite of great advances, remained on the plane of trade union struggle; in this sense it was still "a purely spontaneous movement". In other words, Lenin wrote, referring specifically to the mid-1890s.

> "*There could not yet be* Social-Democratic consciousness among the workers. This consciousness could only be brought to them from without" [p. 53: Lenin's italics].

It was brought, to some extent, when young intellectuals made concerted efforts to reach the mass movement at a time when working class action was rising to new heights in organised strikes. Then, simultaneously, there was

> "the spontaneous awakening of the masses of the workers, the awakening to conscious life and struggle"

and efforts by the revolutionary youth, armed with socialist theory, to reach the workers.

So, Lenin affirmed, the early Social-Democrats

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had by no means confined themselves to economic agitation. On the contrary they had introduced theory and brought to the forefront the necessity of overthrowing the autocracy; they had attempted to unite the strike movement with the political movement, to win all victims of oppression over to socialism. If they ultimately failed, this failure was due to "their lack of revolutionary experience and practical skill".

Class Political Consciousness

The lesson was obvious. Instead of watching the working class movement carry on its economic struggle apart from the political struggle, efforts to co-ordinate action and widen political experience must be intensified.

> "Class political consciousness can be brought to the workers *only from without,* that is, only outside of the economic struggle, outside of the sphere of relations between workers and employers. The sphere from which alone it is possible to obtain this knowledge is the sphere of relationships between *all* the various classes and strata and the state and government—the sphere of the interrelations between *all* the various classes" (p. 99).

Therefore, merely "to go among the workers" was not to bring political knowledge to the working class movement. It was necessary rather to "go among all classes of the population", for each socialist to become

> *"a tribune of the people,* able to react to every manifestation of tyranny and oppression, no matter where it takes place . . . able to group all these manifestations into a single picture of police violence and capitalist exploitation . . . able to take advantage of every petty event in order to explain his socialist convictions and his Social-Democratic demands *to all"* (pp. 99-100).

In sum, Lenin was arguing the urgent need for a tempered revolutionary organisation itself armed with Marxism and political knowledge so that socialist consciousness became firmly rooted and was spread in widening circles; the need for an experienced, organised party which could effectively lead the political struggle on all fronts.

Lenin himself did not, of course, hold that the working class needs "intellectual guidance" before it can develop any ideas at all, as his contemporary critics complained. In fact, he underlined that the most spontaneous strike represents consciousness of the class struggle in embryonic form, that organised strikes are an "awakening to conscious life and struggle". But he was arguing with those who maintained that the working class "spontaneously" arrived at socialism by these means. And so he was insisting that class consciousness can only be transformed into socialist consciousness rapidly and effectively by the persistent transmission of socialist theory to the movement of the most revolutionary class.

At that time this task fell mainly to intellectuals in so far as they alone had a knowledge of Marxism, however garbled in many cases as a result of the censorship. But in arguing that class political consciousness must be brought to the Labour movement from without, Lenin meant much more than this, as the quotations above make clear; he was, of course, putting the case for a genuine working class political party.

It was in the same sense that he called on intellectuals to take their part in widening the outlook of the working class movement, as an essential step in developing political consciousness and action. We want to know everything about all aspects of political life, to take an active part in all political events and not merely trade union activities, Lenin affirmed on behalf of the workers.

> "You intellectuals can acquire this knowledge, and it is your *duty* to bring us this knowledge in a hundred and a thousand times greater measure than you have done up to now; and . . . not only in the form of . . . articles which sometimes—excuse our frankness!—are very dull, but in the form of live *exposures* of what our . . . governing classes are doing " (pp. 92-3).

Lenin did not, of course, believe that the spread of political knowledge, or of socialist theory, was essentially and permanently the province of intellectuals; that they alone could formulate ideas clearly and precisely for the guidance of the working class. He had explained how and why scientific socialist theory first *arose* among intellectuals and that such a theory must inevitably be *introduced* to a movement which, precisely because it was a working class movement, had no access to scientific knowledge. Now he stressed that in other countries, where conditions were more favourable, working class leaders played their part as theoreticians as well as organisers and leaders of the struggle; and went on to insist on the recruitment and training of political organisers from among the working class.

As things were in Russia intellectuals could more easily acquire the necessary knowledge and experience. But the vital task was to promote working class leaders. It was quite wrong to say that because the workers were engaged for 11½ hours a day in the factory the brunt of all other revolutionary functions "must necessarily fall mainly on the shoulders of an extremely small intellectual force". The "very first and most imperative duty" for Russian socialists was to release capable workers, take steps to maintain

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them from party funds and assist them to gain experience; to help every professional organiser so recruited to increase his knowledge and strive

> "to combine within himself the knowledge of working class enviroment and freshness of socialist convictions with professional skill, without which the proletariat *cannot* carry on a stubborn struggle with the excellently trained enemy" (p. 147).

Revolutionary Workers

As the working class masses rise more widely, Lenin wrote, they will "promote from their ranks an increasing number of talented agitators", and, too, "organisers, propagandists and 'practical workers' in the best sense of the term (of whom there are so few among our intelligentsia . . .)". He concluded:

> "The *sin* we commit is that we do not sufficiently stimulate the workers to take this path, 'common' to them and to the 'intellectuals' of professional revolutionary training, and that we too frequently drag them back by our silly speeches" (p. 148).

Lenin's whole purpose, then, as he made clear in his closing paragraphs, was the training of a new kind of leadership for the working class struggle, the formation of a new kind of working class party capable of carrying on the struggle in the most difficult conditions; his aim was "the consolidation of militant Marxism", the replacement of "the rearguard of opportunists" by "a genuine vanguard of the most revolutionary class" (pp. 191-2).

These, then, were Lenin's arguments about the historical necessity of uniting socialism and the working class movement, advanced at a time when many Social-Democratic intellectuals maintained that it was unnecessary to bring in theory from "outside"; that the working class would find its own way to socialism through the trade union struggle and was not yet ready to enter the political field.

Two years later, on the eve of the 1905 Revolution, the political struggle was sharpening daily and a mass movement was also growing among the peasantry. Lenin was then forced to stress, not so much the role of theory as the vital urgency of strengthening organisation, of binding the Social-Democratic Party into a unified whole capable of leading mass action.

By this time the Second Congress of the party had taken place at which the division between the revolutionary majority and the opportunist minority of the party, between the Bolsheviks and the Mensheviks, became clear. Since the Congress the Mensheviks had gained control of *Iskra* through which they were now propagating a confusion of ideas and resisting the introduction of party rules. Now it was they who argued about the importance of theory, but only the better to uphold their own autonomous viewpoints and to dispute the need for a unified, disciplined organisation.

Now, too, it became clear that, whatever their former fine words about the role of the working class movement, what distinguished their views was precisely lack of confidence in the capacity of the working class added to lack of understanding of Marxism. Thus, whereas formerly they had argued that the working class was not ripe for the political struggle, now they argued that it was not ripe for organisation and discipline.

What the Working Class can Teach

In this situation Lenin once more went straight to the point, this time demonstrating the vital lessons the working class had to teach the intellectuals in these matters. Ridiculing the argument that the workers were not ready for a disciplined organisation he pointed out that

> "it is not the proletariat but *certain intellectuals* in our party who lack *self-training* in the spirit of organisation and discipline" (*S.W.*, p. 439).

To the complaint that the new organisational proposals would turn the party into an immense factory, Lenin replied that no better example could be found of lack of acquaintance with the practice and theory of proletarian organisation.

> "For it is precisely the factory . . . which has brought together and disciplined the proletariat, taught it to organise and placed it at the head of all other sections of the toiling and exploiting population. It is precisely Marxism, as the ideology of the proletariat trained by capitalism, that has been teaching unstable intellectuals to distinguish between the factory as an instrument of exploitation (discipline based on the fear of starvation) and as a factor in organisation (discipline based on collective work, united under conditions of technically highly developed production). The discipline and organisation, which it is so difficult for the bourgeois intellectual to acquire, are easily acquired by the proletarian precisely because of the factory 'school' he goes through" (p. 442).

Elsewhere in Europe, Lenin went on, Social-Democratic parties were facing the same struggle between the revolutionary and opportunist wings which had formerly centred on questions of theory but now centred on organisation; the struggle between

> "a tendency to relax and a tendency to tighten up the strictness of organisation and of discipline, between the mentality of the unstable intellectual and the tempered proletarian, between intellectual individualism and proletarian cohesion" (p. 453).

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And, asking what the attitude of bourgeois democracy was to this controversy, he pointed out that it unanimously took the side of the opportunists.

In close connection with hatred of discipline, Lenin remarked

> "is an incessant whining note of disgruntledness, which can be detected in all the writings of all contemporary opportunists . . . and of our minority in particular. They are always being persecuted, restricted, kicked out, besieged and bullied" (p. 457).

But this was simply their way of interpreting the fact that their views had been rejected by the majority. Having themselves broken away from the party line they then

> "pharisaically condemn a split, as if one can imagine any other way of avoiding a split in a party that is at all organised except by the submission of the minority to the majority" (P. 465).

In this situation, it was the primary task to preserve the single party organisation and tirelessly and systematically to explain to every party member all the causes and stages of the disagreement in the party

> "so that he may learn how disastrous is opportunism, which in the sphere of organisation surrenders as helplessly to bourgeois psychology, as uncritically adopts the view of bourgeois democracy and blunts the weapon of the class struggle of the proletariat, as it does in the sphere of our programme and of our tactics" (p. 466).

Communist Parties now exist

Since Lenin analysed so exactly the anatomy of opportunism and drew the necessary lessons, the situation has changed in innumerable ways. The genuine vanguard of the working class movement has now long been established in the form of Communist Parties throughout the world, able to lead the political struggle on all fronts, and at all levels. But there is still a rearguard of opportunists to contend with. Today, as in the past, revisionism and reformism join hands, as John Gollan's recent article clearly demonstrates. Lenin's approach and advice, therefore, has still many lessons. They are lessons which the whole Labour movement needs to take to heart if it is not to lose sight of socialist principles in the fog of "intellectual" theorising; if it is to widen its political and theoretical knowledge, strengthen its organisation and leadership, to achieve socialist ends.

At the same time, a correct appreciation of what Lenin said about the relations between workers and intellectuals in the Communist Party is of vital importance. There could be no greater mistake than that of identifying socialist theory with intellectuals and organisational tasks with the working class. That there has been this tendency in the British party in the past makes it all the more essential to be on guard against it now. Equally, it would be quite wrong to identify opportunism solely with intellectuals instead of recognising that it is defined by attitude to the working class and Marxism; that it is lack of understanding of Marxism, attempts to revise basic Marxist principles under bourgeois pressure in the light of bourgeois ideas, that marks the opportunist. Thus, among those who left the Party at a critical moment in the struggle there were not only intellectuals but also industrial workers; what they had in common was lack of faith in the working class and rejection of the basic principles of Marxism-Leninism.

It is true that intellectuals educated in the bourgeois tradition are to the fore at present in diverting the Labour movement from the socialist road; though they are, of course, supported in this by right wing trade unionists of working class origin. But here it is important to note that it is precisely such intellectuals who set up as the brains of the Labour movement, formulating theories for its guidance. Neither this attitude, nor the theories they propagate, have anything to do with socialism. This is why we condemn such "leaders", not because they are intellectuals but because they attempt to guide the Labour movement under the wing of the bourgeoisie; because their activities diverge fundamentally from the basic socialist task which is precisely to *divert* the working class movement from bourgeois ideology, to arm it with socialist policies and ideas.

This task is undertaken by the Communist Party which consistently, in accordance with the principles of Marxism-Leninism brings scientific socialist theory not only to the working class movement but also to the widest possible sections of the people. Today this task is, if anything, more vital than ever in so far as the ruling class now depends to an ever greater extent on ideological influence to retain its hold. It is a task that the Party can the better fulfil if it represents the most varied sections of the people.

The Contribution of Party Members

Each member of the Party has his own contribution to make in a world which increasingly divides people up into highly specialised trades and professions. If he is an industrial worker, he is an engineer, weaver, miner, docker, shipbuilder, bus driver; if he is a professional worker he may be an economist, historian, philosopher, lawyer, doctor. All these make their contribution to the

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Party from their own particular spheres and that of the intellectuals is of the greatest value to the working class movement. All can make a wider Marxist contribution to the extent that they themselves assimilate Marxism and are able to apply it. Both intellectuals and workers can, and do, give up their jobs and become professional organisers maintained by the Party, leading the struggle in all spheres. It is the elected Executive Committee as a whole, firmly based on the working class and including intellectuals, that is responsible for developing and leading all party work, practical and theoretical.

The Party, therefore, makes no distinction between its members on the grounds of class origin. At the Twenty-Fifth Congress this standpoint was reaffirmed when a tribute was paid to the contribution of Marxist intellectuals in Britain both in fighting for Marxist ideas in their particular field and in the theoretical and practical work of the Party generally. At the same time the political report called on intellectuals to "be modest in their attitude to the working class while remaining confident of their contribution to the fight"; which implies rejection of the notion that intellectuals have a leading role in theoretical matters merely by virtue of their status as intellectuals.

As has been made clear, Lenin never at any point suggested this; the claim that he did so depends on quoting his statement about the *rise* of socialist theory out of context, as a "general principle". Lenin himself made his contribution, at a particular moment in history, as an intellectual who was also an outstanding Marxist. But all his efforts were bent towards founding an organised party which would itself be capable of exercising all the functions of leadership, in the theoretical and the practical field.

With the foundation of Communist Parties theory and practice were brought into integral and effective relationship in a new way; a new stage of development was reached. In so far as Communist Parties have successfully applied Marxism in the tasks confronting them they have also developed and enriched it, as, at an earlier stage, Lenin himself did. They will continue to do so as long as they remain firmly attached to Leninist principles, the essential guarantee of the first socialist revolution and of all other advances on the road to socialism.

Contributions to the discussion on

"Whither Trade Unionism?"

W. Paynter

THE article by Harry Pollitt in "Whither Trade Unionism?" raises vital and urgent questions for militants in the Trade Union movement. A discussion on these questions is really overdue because there is an absence of perspective and co-ordination in the activities of militants within the general Trade Union movement.

I became active in the South Wales Miners Federation following the 1926 strike and remember vividly the controversy that raged around the Mond-Turner Conferences aimed at securing "Peace in Industry" and collaboration between Unions and Employers. The then Miners' Secretary, A. J. Cook, together with Alex Gossip and others were leading the fight against this spurious form of "New Unionism" but unfortunately, without ultimate success. In consequence this policy of collaboration has persisted over the last thirty years and for millions of Trade Union members is the policy they recognise as being traditional in Britain.

During this latter period, therefore, Trade Union struggles against the employers have been spasmodic and more often than not, spontaneous actions by the rank and file, and not officially recognised by the trade unions.

The outcome is serious. The class outlook of trade unionists has been undermined and strikes tend to be seen as expressions of anarchy rather than of organisation.

The policy of collaboration between unions and employers, which gained ascendancy after 1926, was based on the philosophy that there was an identity of interest between worker and employer. This has grown until today it has taken organisational form not only at the top, but also at the production source. Productivity, efficiency, profitability, competitive ability, etc., these terms are now part of the vocabulary of the Trade Union Branch Officer within the machinery for Joint Conciliation within industry. This machi-

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nery is the organisational expression of the idea that the interests of worker and employer are identical.

There is need for a deep study and appraisal of the changes that have taken place within the trade union movement within the last twenty-five years, and their impact upon union members.

The strength of the outlook that there is this identity of interests within industry must not be under-estimated. It provides the setting for the acceptance by the unions and their members that it is inevitable and necessary that wage increases can only be provided by improving the efficiency of industry even when that involves the pruning of manpower and production units. It is not necessary to put the arguments against this outlook in an article of this kind, but there is a great need for providing clarity and understanding among the rank and file.

It is in this outlook that the policy contained in *Industry and Society* has its roots. Capitalism is acceptable as an economic and social system; it needs only to be made more proficient —that is the essence of Labour's policy.

The Trades Union Congress by its strong opposition to Labour's previous programme for nationalising certain industries has powerfully influenced this new policy. It must therefore be recognised that the T.U.C. as at present constructed, and by the outlook it represents, is the grave-digger of progressive socialist policies within the Labour Party.

We are discussing this problem of "Whither Trade Unionism?" in a situation where the employers and their Government are prosecuting an offensive against the working class. The Tory Government is blatantly initiating and operating the economic and financial policies required by Big Business. The effect of these policies has substantially worsened the position of the working people by indirect attacks upon wages.

This would not have taken place, let alone succeeded, had the Government not known in advance that the Trades Union Congress would offer nothing but purely formal resistance. The T.U.C.'s strenuous repudiation of the use of "industrial action for political ends" is, in effect, a "safe conduct pass" for the Tory Government to use political action for industrial ends.

To use industrial action to defeat the Government would involve a political strike and would require great preparation, and certainly a greater measure of unity and class-consciousness than is to be found at present in the Trade Union movement.

It is not the issue. Any struggle for a wages increase to offset the effect of Government policy is indirectly a struggle against that policy. The character of a struggle is determined by its direct aim, which in the case under consideration would be economic.

But the dictum of the General Council of no "industrial action for political ends" was interpreted by themselves in the London busmen's strike. The strike was justified, they said, but the steps necessary to make it quickly effective and successful, were not justified. The strike was thus contained and isolated and the strategic design for its intended defeat was accomplished.

In a situation such as now obtains the outlook and policy of this kind of leadership can only have the effect of immobilising the unions in face of an employers' and Government offensive.

If this appraisal is correct, consideration must be given by the unions simultaneously prosecuting wages or other claims to some form of alliance as a short term measure.

By this means, their struggle could be co-ordinated and made more effective with the prospect of success being greatly enhanced.

The job of changing this outlook is, of course, essentially one of changing the outlook and policy of the unions and their top leadership who comprise the T.U.C. and the General Council. This cannot be done from outside. It is the job of the militant trade unionists to stimulate greater rank and file interest in trade union affairs, in branches exercising their power to determine the policy resolutions before Conferences, and the creation of a class conscious leadership in the lower organs of the Trade Union movement.

It is important too, that such activities are conducted within the rules and constitution of the union concerned. Should the Rules or Constitution offer impediments, then the members must be won to remove them.

F. Stanley

THE article by Harry Pollitt. "Whither Trade Unionism?" should be welcomed by all active trade unionists, sharply facing as it does the very serious problems which exist, and particularly with its emphasis on the great dangers facing the working class if steps are not taken to find the solution to these problems.

There is no one who will claim that the solution can be gained overnight, or other than by the most consistent and patient attention, but at the same time it is necessary to point out the danger of many honest and militant trade unionists getting more than a little cynical, with exclamations of, "Well, what else can you ex-

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pect, with the present bunch constituting virtually the whole of the leadership?"

The fact is, as recent events have shown and as referred to in Pollitt's article, thousands of rank and file trade union members are prepared to take action, and if necessary, see it through to the end if there is clear leadership which coincides with their interests. The capitalist press of course reports those working-class actions which are big enough for them not to ignore, and yet any active worker will know that every single day in factories, pits, yards and building jobs throughout Britain, there are hundreds of actions taken by workers in defence of, and in furtherance of, their wages and working conditions. These actions take a variety of forms: stoppages, working "to rule," overtime embargoes, and so on, and may involve small groups, scores or hundreds, but all illustrate the preparedness and ability of our workers to fight.

It is directly from the workshop floor, or whatever physical shape the place may be where men and women labour, that our mighty trade union movement has been erected—the head offices came some time after!—and it is indeed from the base that the renewal and revitalisation of class principles throughout the entire trade union structure must come.

It would be more than interesting to tabulate what has been achieved by sound trade union organisation in the factories, etc., where such organisation has comprised the regular participation of all members, with properly functioning shop stewards and appropriate factory committees, and where such organisation has been regarded not just as a means of recording how many workers are trade union members paying their contributions, but as the weapon for improving working and living conditions. In many such factories and other enterprises basic rates of pay have been won far in excess of those agreed following national negotiation; piecework rates have been secured producing payment much higher than the minimums nationally agreed. Many other facilities have been won in these workplaces which as yet are not being enjoyed by all trade unionists.

All of this is extremely commendable, in addition to the fact that there are hundreds of factory organisations which in the individual workplaces bring together members of many different trade unions in a common day-to-day front against the employer. To put it bluntly, in very many work-places there is a world of difference between the level and spirit of the trade union organisation inside, and the so-called "official" movement outside. It is precisely this contradiction which desperately needs to be remedied.

It is insufficient to castigate the members who do not attend their branch meetings, and so fail to take part in the work of ensuring that their trade unions nationally reflect their interests in the same way as their factory organisation does. Why is it that workers can be convinced of the need to establish and maintain strong factory organisation, and yet not be convinced of the need to safeguard fully their organisation by participation in the business of the Branch, with the consequent effect on District, Area and National Conferences, and thereby on the character of leadership at all levels?

Sporadic and plaintive calls for attendance at Branch meetings do not do the trick—something more is needed. Is it not rather that there is a complacency about the position in the "official" trade union movement which can stem from the mistaken feeling of "self-sufficiency" with good factory organisation?—the view that as long as the position is satisfactorily held in the factory there is no pressing need to pay attention to the organisation outside? Yet there is no single factory or other enterprise organisation that can stand alone for all time, safe from any concerted attack which the employers may make on it.

Is it not true that there is not the same amount of *consistent* attention paid in the best factories to this question? Is it not true that in the best establishments, where there are regular shop and job meetings involving the majority of workers, the question of Branch attendance and what results from it is not featured to the same extent as the problems of the "job" itself? Yet the situation in the movement demands that there should be the application of precisely the same methods which have built up and maintained sound factory organisation. This is, of course, yet another job of work which can only be undertaken by active trade unionists—nobody else is going to do it—and it is an indispensable job because the gains won in the individual factories can only be properly safeguarded if the rest of the trade union movement moves forward and makes its advance at the same pace.

Yes, many illusions are being dispelled at the present moment—short-time working and so-called "redundancy" is compelling many thousands of workers to think anxiously about present and future prospects, but they have proved that they will act if given the opportunity and correct leadership.

One of the biggest contributing factors to the present low level of trade union consciousness is the absence of organised working class edu-

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cation by the trade unions. Indeed, the kind of education now being encouraged is a by-product of the dominant outlook of collaboration between unions and employers. Week-end schools, summer schools and the rest, operate an educational curriculum more suitable for producing directors of industry than trade union leaders. The subjects cover industrial efficiency, work study, joint consultation etc., and this kind of "educational" activity by unions is increasing.

The South Wales Miners have introduced their own educational scheme. It is non-residential in character, the residential college being too costly.

A full-time educational officer is employed by the union and the coalfield divided into four areas. Two twelve-week educational sessions are held in each of the areas. Students are appointed by the Lodges and selected for the classes after being interviewed. Then for one day each week for the twelve weeks, they attend the Area class, their loss of wages and expenses being met by the union.

The subjects dealt with are political economy, social history, history of the British miners, and union administration. After finishing the sessions, the students are periodically brought into week-end or evening classes. Consideration is now being given to correspondence courses for these students to continue their interest and development. The extension of this system of working class education to other Areas of the union, or other unions, could lead to the establishment of a residential college for the more advanced students with the costs of its maintenance being shared.

Another principal factor is, of course, as Harry Pollitt states, the anarchic structure of the British trade unions. The Miners' Union is probably the nearest approach to Industrial Unionism in this country, but even there the principle has been compromised.

Geographical areas comprise more than one constituent part of the union with representation on the National Executive Committee. There is therefore no complete integration of membership within the geographical areas. To this extent, the unity of the organisation is impaired.

The general trade union pattern is, however, much more chaotic. Numerous unions operate in identical industries, vying with each other for prestige and membership and reducing the overall strength and effectiveness of the industry's workers in their relations with the employers.

No trade unionist can possibly justify the perpetuation of this state of affairs. The vested interests of the few union leaders are the main obstacle and have to be posed against the class interests of millions of industrial workers.

I think it was George Harvey, a Durham checkweigher, who produced a book on "Industrial Unionism" that I read many years ago. In the last thirty years, however, there has been little consideration given anywhere to the problem of attaining one union for one industry. Neither has there been sustained agitation for such reorganisation by militant trade unionists. Yet, no one can deny the need for fundamental reorganisation, or, that the responsibility is upon class-conscious trade unionists to constantly press for it.

"Whither Trade Unionism?" is a question that contains a serious challenge to those of us active in the Trade Union movement. We have to recognise that the general Trade Union movement is ill equipped, both organisationally and politically, to repulse a capitalist offensive. Few of the existing leaders have either the will or the skill required to meet such a situation.

There is no short road to the achievement of the changes required. Increased activity to develop greater interest by the rank and file, in the affairs and policy of the union, is the only basis upon which greater strength, unity and militant leadership can be achieved.

J. Jarvie

COMRADE POLLITT'S article has arrived just "on time". Our movement needs unity, politically and organisationally, more than ever. Down in the deep heart of our working class, the need for unity has always remained constant.

But the ideological heritage bequeathed to us by the pioneers was not intended to be a carefully preserved heirloom. They meant us to get on with the job. In the course of the past forty years, by various processes, improvements in organisational unity have been achieved in the mining industry and the distributive industry; the foundries; the trowel trades in the building industry; and in the printing industry in London.

There have been other examples, but on the whole we cannot claim to have made any great advance. Thus today we have three forms of trade unionism in Britain: craft, general, and industrial (and the latter only in limited form).

Harry Pollitt says that it's a big job to change the structure of trade unionism. Too true, but the biggest part of the big job is to change the outlook of those in key positions in the leadership of our movement.

At the Blackpool T.U.C. last year, the late Jim Campbell moved a mildly worded resolution

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which merely asked the General Council to conduct a survey of trade union structure and report back in 1958. The General Council opposed this, and who did they put up as their spokesman? Mr. Alan Birch, General Secretary of U.S.D.A.W., whose organisation was responsible for moving the much more effective resolution adopted at Southport in 1943 (and referred to by Comrade Pollitt in his article).

It is often said that craft outlook is a barrier to unity. I don't believe it. I am a craftsman, so is Picasso, but our outlook on life isn't reactionary because of that. Our union has striven for unity in the most practical form we know—amalgamation, and we have had the support of our members. Why? Because we put the issue squarely to our members; because we were honest with them and with ourselves. Our old craft is in a changing world, technical advances shake the very roots of our existence. We reached the stage where we had to shed the "brass rule" and "leather apron" complex, and look the new technique in the face.

But you can't embrace the changing technique in industry and deny the inevitable effect that it has upon trade union structure. The craft unions can be won for unity.

At the same time it's no damned use running around beating your breast about unity unless we are prepared to do some work. Although the General Council opposed Jim Campbell last year, Vincent Tewson did utter some sense when he said that Congress had made recommendations on many occasions, but that the unions must strive themselves for closer unity. There is nothing in the world to stop us from going ahead. Of course it would help tremendously if Congress were to exert all its power, but we needn't stand paralysed until it does.

Some years ago, discussions took place in both the engineering industry and the shipbuilding industry, between unions associated with one another. Most agreed that unity was essential, but little of practical value resulted. There was, of course, one real difficulty.

All unions weren't at the same stage of preparedness, they were not all ready to march off with the left foot forward in line abreast. As a consequence, the tendency was to wait for the "awkward squad" to get ready. I believed this to be dangerous. The membership of those unions who had come to accept amalgamation felt let down. The question drifted into abeyance, other problems took precedence.

The remedy is to strike while the iron is hot. Weld the parts that have reached welding heat.

I know that some will take the view that this process can be a long and frustrating one. But I don't agree; every amalgamation that succeeds serves as an example to others. In any case, we have got to relate the task to the conditions we are faced with and not to any grandiose scheme. I can recall that round about the middle of the last century Robert Owen formed an all-in union called the Grand National Consolidated Trade Union, which was short lived. I suggest this was due to the fact that while in form it was united, its content was unable to stand the strain of industrial conflict.

When agreement in principle is reached between unions wishing to amalgamate, a number of very big problems have to be resolved round the table. This is where the hard graft comes in. Union rules and constitutions vary. Most craft unions pay provident benefits, and members rightly insist on their rights being protected. The methods of electing officials and delegates have to be considered. The status and authority of executives, and full time officers requires careful consideration. But above all, I believe the problem which concerns the members of craft unions most is the preservation of their trade identity, and the fear that their particular interest will not be serviced efficiently.

We must remember that those unions have built up over a century many fine traditions. These traditions have bound together the members of the small craft unions with a tenacious yet proud loyalty. This is part of the very fabric of our movement and of the history of our class.

One material expression of these traditions is the close, even personal, link between the top and the bottom of the union. The General Secretary isn't "Mr", or sometimes even "Brother", it's just "Willie". The officials come from the fire, through the movement to the top. They aren't professionals. They have the knowledge of the trade. When they negotiate, the things they speak of aren't abstract, but real.

Another material expression of these traditions is that a system of wages and conditions has grown throughout the years, which reflects the peculiarities of each craft. For example, our trade was and still is predominantly a piece-work trade, by its very nature. You can only subject iron to the will of the hammer while it's hot. National Agreements notwithstanding, real wages and certain conditions are still determined largely on the smithy floor. Therefore, any new form of trade union structure must retain within it that freedom, with delegates who know the job.

Recent moves towards amalgamation have generally taken the form of a large union seeking to effect unity with a group or an individual small union. (The initiative isn't necessarily in that

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order.) We must guard against any tendency on the part of the larger union to consider the process as simply adding something to an existing structure. The change must be not only quantitative but also qualitative in character. Each union must be prepared to effect changes in its structure to make the blend properly. Any other principle would be looked upon by the smaller union as suspiciously like absorption.

We must create a structure that has the combined strength of all, yet is flexible enough to provide freedom for the sectional interests of each trade. I believe that present indications show that this is acknowledged.

At any rate, interest in amalgamation within the engineering and shipbuilding industries has revived recently. The issue which was discussed in a broad general way in 1956 lay dormant for two years.

The present endeavours, though more limited in scope, may yet prove to be more practical. Their success will inevitably provide the bridgehead for others to follow. This paves the way for the creation of one union for each industry.

Industrial unionism must be achieved within the existing conditions. Ideals are a spur to action, else they become hollow. Let us examine the shipbuilding industry.

Of the forty unions in the Confederation, some twenty-five have members in shipyards. Within that twenty-five there are three main groups of unions.

(*a*) Those who have a majority of members in the shipyards.

(*b*) Those whose members are fairly evenly divided between shipyards and engineering shops.

(*c*) Those who have only a minority of members in shipyards.

Consequently it isn't a simple question of joining all the *unions* together. Those which have a major interest in some other industry, such as the A.S.W., General Workers etc., would obviously have a different outlook towards amalgamation from those whose major interest is in the yards. Their interest in amalgamation would lie elsewhere. Neither could we expect them to surrender a section of their membership at this stage of development. Despite these difficulties progress can be made.

I believe that the key lies in the close relationship between the two industries—shipbuilding and engineering. The bulk of the unions in the Confederation have one thing in common. Their members, in the main, are within these two industries. With effort, and hard work, the amalgamation of groups of unions within the two related industries is possible, with the boilermakers and the A.E.U. as the magnetic poles.

Eventually there can emerge two principal organisations. Neither of these could be properly termed industrial unions because their membership would still be connected with both industries. However that could complete the process of amalgamation of *unions*. The next stage in the process could then be the exchange of sections. The Engineering Organisation could release its shipyard members to the Shipbuilding Organisation and vice versa.

One problem would remain to complete the process, and that is those sections who are members of large unions related to other industries, such as the A.S.W. and the General Workers' Unions. These latter would not have participated in the process of the amalgamation of *unions* within the two industries, and consequently that aspect would require consideration.

That as I see it is a practical way forward to achieving the aim of closer unity.

Published by the Communist Party, 16 King Street, London, W.C.2, and printed by Farleigh Press Ltd. (T.U. all depts.). Beechwood Rise, Watford, Herts.

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